

-TITLE-HENRYKA KOWALSKI
-I_DATE-6/29/87
-SOURCE-CHRISTIAN RECUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-
-IMAGE_QUALITY-
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

Henryka was born in 1911, in Lynburg (?) a big town in Poland. She lived in the Jewish quarter, the apartments were not as expensive there. There was not much anti-Semitism. She had three sisters and brothers, she was in the middle. She studied in a Polish school with many Jewish students. Her best friend was Jewish, and they studied together. She loved her friend more than her own sisters (crying), she cries about her. Sasha Vilder was her friend's name, they had many similar friends. Her father was an engineer, who worked with Jews, and her mother had Jewish friends. Henryka did not know about the anti-Semitism of the Polish because she lived with Jews. Her youngest brother is still alive and living in London, he speaks Jewish. She and Sasha grew up together, they both married doctors. Sasha had a daughter and Henryka had a son. They were both busy in their own lives. When war time came Sasha was living in Lentar (?) which came to be Russian. Henryka was in Warsaw she knew about the German regime, and the Nazis. She wanted to help her friend Sasha, but couldn't get to her. Finally she went to her friend, but couldn't convince her to leave her village. Every time she would ask Sasha to leave Sasha would say soon. The night the village was searched for the first time Sasha and her family were killed. Henryka felt terrible. When she went to the village she found another family. First he took the woman into her home. You can imagine how tough it is, she says, to take someone Jewish without papers on the train. We had to walk to my village to avoid inspection, says Henryka. She hid the woman in a place where her Uncle was a bishop. There was one room with a bed, and a table. In a few days the woman's husband came. Henryka went back to the village of Lentar to get them their belongings and met the woman's sister who also wanted to escape. She took the sister back with her. Henryka was alone with her son. Her husband was in prison, captured by the Gestapo. Her brother had been sent to Siberia. Henryka got this family forged papers. While in hiding the couple had a baby, whom they had baptized in the church. One day Henryka's husband got permission to leave the prison. She told him that she had been hiding Jews. Her husband said he was too scared to be with them. So she, her husband, and their son went to Warsaw. Her husband was shot a little before the war was over. She remained in Warsaw with their son. She remarried a man who had been in Siberia.

The Jewish family that she helped moved to Israel following the war.

Henryka's mother was always in a hurry, they didn't usually go to church. Her father worked with Jews. Sometimes Henryka prayed with Sasha on Saturdays. She will always be sad about Sasha. Sasha's family was very poor. Sasha father had emigrated to America, the mother worked in a shop. Sasha's brother survived and is living in Israel. Henryka came to Israel in 1957, because Julius (her husband) has a Jewish brother in Israel. Henryka's son is still living in Warsaw. When asked how she felt during the war Henryka replied scared. She thought only about feeding her child. She didn't think about how she would help or feed the family she just did. Whenever she thinks about the family she thinks about Sasha (crying). Henryka's son grew up to be a nice looking boy, he has been married for thirty years. She thinks about her friend Sasha, what a good singer she was. Once Sasha was free, now she is dead; it is terrible to lose a friend. Since Henryka and her husband have come to Israel they haven't asked for anything. They did want to be remembered at Yad Vashem. Henryka's son hasn't been able to see their tree.