

**GREGORY SHERSHNEVSKY**  
**BORN IN VILNA, LITHUANIA**  
**APRIL, 1941**

Gregory Shershnevsky was born in Vilna, Lithuania, in April 1941, two months before the war began. The German army entered Vilna on June 22, and all Jews immediately were moved to a first ghetto in downtown. Earlier, his parents had tried to stay ahead of the Germans but were captured in Whiterussia and forced to go back to Vilna. By then, all his relations already were in the ghetto, and his parents also went there. Shortly after that, they all were moved to a second ghetto which comprised two or three city blocks and held about 100,000 Jews from Vilna and surrounding areas. The adults received work permits which allowed them to earn some money outside the ghetto under German supervision. When the Germans started their extermination program, they first killed mostly children. His parents went into hiding and, in November 1941, found a Christian, Polish woman who was willing to take the baby. His parents hid him in a garbage can and so smuggled him out of the ghetto. That probably was the last time his mother saw him.

The Polish woman took him to the city hall claiming to have found him on her door steps and that she wished to adopt him, since he did not look like a Jewish baby. The tape shows a copy of his fake "birth certificate" with "parents unknown." She gave him a Polish name, Stanislaw, by which he still is called by some of his friends.

He talks quite a bit about this unusual woman who he thought to be his mother, and of course he talked only Polish. She took in, in a similar fashion, about fourteen other children, not all Jewish. He still remembers dimly the basement of the house where he lived. The building had been taken over by a German hospital where she worked as a nurse. Once, she found a wounded soldier in the street and took him to the hospital. He turned out to be a major in the Russian army and, as a reward for this rescue, she received later a small pension from the Russian Government. After the war, she moved to some distant relatives in Poland, and the last time he saw her was in 1967; she was very poor and over 80 years old.

During the war, his parents went underground and became part of the resistance movement. His father and some 100 people tried to escape but they were betrayed and only seven survived a German ambush. His mother disappeared and probably was executed by the Germans, but there are no records. After Vilna was liberated in 1944, his father picked him up from the woman who had saved him. A few years later, his father remarried and Gregory now has a stepbrother born in 1949.

The tape shows several of the children. His uncle first went to Russia and later was sent to Poland to help set up the new Government. He (the uncle) also wrote a book about himself and members of his family. Apparently, it was quite successful but never was translated.

One of the "children adopted by the Polish woman" went to Palestine right after the war and stayed in touch with her. He hopes that she is now listed at the Yad Vashem as a righteous gentile. He will check and, if necessary take the required steps.

He emphasizes that one cannot forget the atrocities of Auschwitz and elsewhere but feels one should not generalize and think of everybody as an enemy. The interview does not indicate why and how he came to Buffalo and gives no information about his education.