

~L MIGDAL - Phoenix ~c/ ~

I was born in 1920 in a little town 40 miles from Warsaw. We were 7 girls. My father's name was Gutman Olshek and my mother was Edith. I went to seven grades in public school and later to night school and to high school. I had no friends outside of Jews.

We had a comfortable life, my father was a furrier, he had a store and 6 or 7 workers worked for him. I had a pleasant childhood. At age 12 I realized that Poles were standing outside of our store and telling Poles not to buy in a Jewish store. This was during 1936,7,8.

In 1939 Germans attacked Poland. We knew we would have a bad time. We did not know where to escape. We were under the Germans for four weeks and then the Russians took over our town. We thought we were safe. Warsaw Jews escaped to our town to be under the Russians. The Russians told them to go to Byolostok. In 1941 the Germans attacked our town with bombs. My brother in law died of wounds in the bombing. My sister was pregnant. The Germans were killing Jews in the woods. In the synagogue they rounded up the Jews and burned the synagogue.

The Jews of the town had a meeting and decided that the Jews would go 18 kilometers from our town. Our parents decided we would go 30 kilometers. My father rented a horse and buggy and hired a non Jew to drive us there. He helped pack our belongings but refused to drive the buggy. My parents and five sisters took off walking in the woods. 3 to 4000 Jews were shot Ditches were dug and the Jews put in ditches and killed. We remained in the Chekenovitz ghetto.

A Jewish lady gave us a room. We lived in that room. We stayed there for half a year and my sister gave birth to a little girl without a husband. The other sister had two children and they were living in a syagogue, terrible conditions. We lived there half a year. My sister in Warsaw came to our ghetto. They were taking the Jews from Warsaw to Treblinka. Treblinka was 3 1/2 miles from where I was born. A Polish lady told us about Treblinka They were taking Jews from France, Poland, and Austria and killing them there. We lived in the ghetto till the end of August 1942.

My 14 and 15 year old sisters escaped among the Polish people and told them they were furriers. They could make furs for them. My older sister and I were taken by a Jewish lady through the wires at night and we walked all night . The next day we heard the Germans surrounded the ghetto and they were killing the Jews in Treblinka. We started crying. The Gentile lady took us out and kept us for a week in her home. My parents and sisters were dead and there was nothing we could do. We wanted to live to see the end of Hitler.

We were working in the Gentile woman's house. She gave us work for 7 weeks. We were in a barn and Jewish people were roaming around. We survived that winter. Sometimes Polish people gave us bread. A Gentile couple helped a lot of Jews. In the first year there were 18 Jewish people. The second summer we were living in the fields and were hungry. We were in an underground place like a bunker with 18 Jewish people. At five in the morning 3 or 4 people went us and we left there. The Germans surrounded the bunker and killed all the Jews. We went into a Polish house and we thought they would help us survive. We asked them to let us stay for a few days out of the snow. They told us to go. We went to a barn

and the dog was barking all night. When we were liberated we heard that the man who did not want to let us in had five Jewish people in his house for two years. They gave him money. Some of them are still alive.

While we were in the barn Germans came. Some Poles told them Jews were there. They looked for us but did not find us and they left. During the last summer in the barn we were told that Polish gangs killed all Jewish people. While we were in the barn Poles came and said there were Jewish girls there. At that time different Jewish girls came and they killed one girl. The other girl knocked the revolver out of the Poles's hand and went into hiding. She survived.

After the liberation Polish people killed the man and wife who hid us because they hid us and we survived. They brought us food. A Polish lady put out potatoes for 14 and 15 year olds and they survived.

The last summer we were hiding in the corn in the heat. The bar was near the fighting. We thought we were the only Jewish people who survived. We were licking the dew for water. We were near the front, bombs were flying. We were hungry. We were down but we wanted to survive.

Before the Germans left they burned the fields. We were one quarter of a mile from where they burned the fields. We were running and we came to a man's place. We stayed in his fields for a few days. At the end of August 1944 we heard the Germans were running away. Next morning it was quiet and in the distance we heard Russian spoken. A Polish man came with food. You are free. We started to cry, we did not believe it. You can come to our place. The next day you will go to Tchnowitz. We went to his place and while we were there a girl with two children came, she survived. We left the barn and went to Tchnovitz. While we were walking Russians were shooting at us. When they saw we were girls they did not bother us.

We met up with my sisters. I did not recognize them. Four sisters survived. We stayed in that town about two weeks. We went to the town we were born in. Our house was still there. When the Polish people saw us they were scared. Five Gentile families were living in our house. They gave us another place. We took in another Jewish girl. We were 5 girls. We lived in that place from September through the wintertime. We heard Polish people were killing Jews again. We did not know where to go. We went to Byolostok. Warsaw was not liberated. Another Jewish family survived because a Polish man kept them in an attic, husband, wife and three children. They were very rich. They killed the man and son coming from the mill. While they killed them we ran out of the house. The Polish police were working with the organization that was killing the Jews. Five of us went to another town. We did not sleep all night. The organization took Jews off trains and buses and were killing them. We went on the bus and said we were not Jewish. We went to Byolostok where we had some friends. We were in Byolostok four months till May.

At the end of May the war was over and we went to Austria where we lived in a DP camp. My husband was in the American Army. I sent a telegram telling him I was alive and when he came to the US, his brother gave him the telegram. They told my future husband that all people who survived were crazy, sick, they do not know what they are doing. He sent me a letter that he would send paper that I should come to Germany. My older sister

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married a man in Italy and later came to Montreal. Two sisters married in DP camps in Germany. He sent me papers for a war bride and as a war bride I had privileges to come to the U.S.. On July 4, 1947 I came to the US and we were married. My two younger sisters live in Calif, Oakland and they are still living there ./ We were in California from 1950, we lived in New York first for four years. We came to Phoenix in 1969 because I had bad arthritis