

## **RG-50.091.0057 Henry & Sophie Billys, and daughter, Millie Korman**

Henry Billys, born in Lodz, Poland on 30 June 1910; describes his family and childhood; being one of three children with one sister 1.5 years older and a brother 4 years younger, who ultimately came to the United States with him; meeting his wife in 1932 as school-aged children and marrying her in 1937; their daughter (Millie Korman) being born 18 months after they were married (an only child) in October of 1938; residing in Lodz when it became the Litzmannstadt ghetto in 1939; not wanting to stay in the ghetto for fear that Millie would not survive and thereby leaving Lodz on 11 November 1939 and moving to Krakow and onto Lithuania; working in a shoe factory before war broke out in Lithuania in June 1941; being sent out of Vilnius by the Lithuanian government; being detained with brother-in-law, who was born in 1914, in jail until Sophie could send papers; receiving papers in January of 1941 and returning to Krakow in February of 1942; his parents being taken out of the Lodz ghetto on one of the last transports to Auschwitz and killed there; his sister being taken by boat to a camp in Germany with 600 other young girls only to die when the boat sank; receiving a certificate certifying him as an Aryan at the end of 1944; the Germans leaving on 11 January 1945; the Russians coming to Krakow on 13 January 1945; traveling to Wroclaw and onto Hirschberg after the War; traveling to Stuttgart in 1946 and back to Poland eight months later to collect Sophie and Millie, who was 8 years old at the time; staying near Nuremberg for one year until May of 1948 when the family traveled to the United States by boat from Hamburg to NY; how the HIAS placed them in a hotel there until they traveled to an Aunt in Cleveland; working for 7.5 years starting sweeping and packing until he learned sales and electrical work ultimately buying the business during the Korean War; having sold his business at 62 years old in 1972; establishing a \$2500 perpetual scholarship fund called the Henry & Sophie Billys Scholarship Foundation.

Sophie Billys (nee Pacanowska), describes her family and childhood; growing up in an upper middle class family; having one older sister and a middle sister who was six years old in 1942; traveling to Krakow in May of 1940; her sister and her husband moving to Zdunska Wola; how at the end of 1941, she stayed back with her older sister's two children while her other sister and her husband took her seven year old niece out of the ghetto; her parents and in-laws remaining in Lodz ghetto in a 2 bedroom apartment where she brought them food on 29 November 1940, the next day the ghetto was closed and this was the last time she saw them; traveling to a Pravoslavie church in the Lodz area and paying one zloty to purchase a birth certificate belonging to Zophia Iwaczenko (born on the same day and same year) to help her travel and prove that she was "not Jewish," her sister taking her to Bochnia (near Krakow); working in a Post Office in Krakow and living with 200 other girls for 3 months learning how to type and how to send telegrams; mom dying during gallstone removal surgery in April of 1942 and Dad following not long after; how her sister returned from Auschwitz to collect her daughter and also moved to Cleveland and then onto Florida after she was widowed; sewing, weaving, and painting and repairing china for work when she initially moved to the United States; securing a job as a manicurist for a time as well as work in lamp repair; retiring from work after her daughter married.

Millie Korman (nee Billys) describes her family and childhood; her first words being Ukrainian; arriving in the United States at age 9.5; entering American schools at the first-grade level because she did not know the language; learning English within two years of living in the United States; her struggles with identifying as Jewish; getting married and having children of her own.