

KARP, Henia Konopke
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Abstract

Henia Konopke Karp was born in Lida, Poland (Lida is now in Belarus) in 1931 to Rachel and Israel Konopke, who were observant and also Zionist.

On May 8, 1942, Nazis rounded up Jews, sent them to the armory, and shot them. Henia and her older brother Harry were the only family members to survive.

Harry was a member of the Jabotinsky Zionist Revisionist group, and had joined the Bielski Partisans. Harry took Henia with him into a swampy forest to live with the partisans.

Henia became very despondent, and did not want to live. Her brother tried to comfort and encourage her. They remained in the forest until Russian soldiers liberated the partisans.

After the war, Henia went to Romania, and then Israel. She earned a high school degree, got married, and had a son. She, her husband, and son immigrated to the United States, where she gave birth to daughter.

Henia prepares Seders in their home. She says her daughter, who keeps kosher now, is more Jewish than she.

Her brother had gone to Siberia, and immigrated to United States in 1976. He was very close with Henia and her family.

Henia says the United States is wonderful. But she wishes that the Jewish community had done more to help Eastern European Jews during the Holocaust.

She says that treating people humanely is the top priority.

Time-coded notes

:16 May 8, 1942 was a beautiful day. Germans rounded up all Jews and divided them into two lines. Henia was separated from her parents, and never saw them again. Except for older brother Harry, all other siblings were killed.

:64 Harry had joined the Bielski Jewish partisans, and took Henia with him into the dark, swampy forest. Partisans encouraged other Jews to join them.

2:09 Life was very difficult, and Henia become despondent and wanted to die. Her brother comforted and encouraged her through these years. Russian soldiers liberated them.

After the war, Henia went to Romania. Then, aided by Jews in Palestine, she went to Palestine, where she earned a high school degree, got married, and had a son. They emigrated to United States, and she gave birth to a daughter. Her husband became a kosher butcher. He died when he was 54 years old.

Her brother went to Siberia, and then came to the United States in 1976. He was very close to Henia's family.

3:72 Henia's son and daughter were very close to her brother. Both children were wonderful. Son became a pharmacist.

3:95 Henia had been reared in an observant, Zionist family. In United States, Henia made Seders at home rather than go to the Catskills.

4:25 Henia learned to read, write, and speak English for her children's sake.

4:41 Son could have gone to medical school but family did not have enough money. Henia wanted to teach early education. She had an excellent memory. Her children urged her to go to college.

4:54 Henia talks about how wonderful the United States is, but she wishes that the Jewish community could have done more to help Jews in Eastern Europe.

5:24 Money was never important. Treating people humanely was top priority.

Her son and daughter-in-law are very sensitive to Henia.

Her daughter now keeps kosher kitchen and is "thirsty" to learn about Judaism. She is more Jewish than she.

Brother kept kosher home. Brother's son keeps kosher, but daughter does not.

Brother's wife is not at all observant, and often travels on holidays.