

## FELICIA WEINGARTEN

Born Feiga (Tzipora) Karo 4/12/26 in Lodz, Poland. One sister. Father Hirsch Karo (B. ~1892) in Gostyni, Poland and mother Maryam Pritzker (B. ~1896) in Beloga Tserkov, Ukraine. Father had 7 brothers and one sister who lived in Kutno, Zychlen and Plotsk. All of them and couins died later, probably in Treblinka. Maternal grandmother Chaya Vasong and stepfather Bernard Vasong. Father the principal in a Jewish boy's gymnasium. Polish spoken at home. Family not very observant and belonged to Progressive (Postepowi) Movement. She went to a Jewish girl's day school. Jewish subjects taught in Hebrew and other subjects in Polish. She was aware of antisemitism as many Polish born Jews living in Germany were driven out in 1938. People were "upset" but did nothing.

Lodz occupied 10/39 by Germans. Jews put in slum area, Baluty, as a ghetto in late 1939. Father had been arrested and jailed as a member of the intelligentsia and not released until 12/39. 160,000 in Ghetto. Disease and malnutrition rampant. No fuel for heat and little food. "Eldestar" of ghetto Judenrat was Chaim Rumkowski. Older children and adults worked 12 hours/day at hard labor. Weingarten attended clandestine school and worked 5 hours/day in a factory making ladies' hat decorations. In 1942, SS went house to house (Gehsperre) and took children, and infirm. She had typhus and after recovery worked in a bakery, then a kitchen and then a laundry. Knew people were being sent away to Arbeitslager camps. Commandant of ghetto was Hans Biebow, later tried by the Poles and executed. Bieber told remaining Jews (70,000) they'd be resettled. SS again went house to house and found her family hiding above the Jewish police station on 8/12/44. Taken in cattle cars to Auschwitz where she and mother selected to live. Separated from father who also lived but later died. She and mother sent to transit camp Ausganglager where they were stripped, had hair cut of and showered. Any valuables taken, then crammed into barracks. Warned by Slovak women to obey as virtually all of them had died or been killed, only 30 of 3000 surviving. Poles, Hungarians and Ukrainians in the camp, but were treated better than the Jews. Constant beatings and "selections." Many died of hunger. She ended up working in an aircraft factory in Bad Kudova with Russian and Polish POW's and civilian slave laborers. Called "untermenschen" and "offenmenschen" ( rag people and monkey people) by civilian laborers. SS women guards often cruel but rarely kind. Hungarian women broke down quickly as they had not been conditioned by ghetto living. Weingarten tried to stay clean to survive. February 1945 put on death march in snow to camp near Breslau as Russians approached. Put on coal trains to Bergen-Belsen where Jewish women were "dumped." Mother died shortly after arrival and was put in mounds of other dead around the camp. Liberated 4/15/45 by British army. She was emaciated and nearly dead from typhus. After a month and a half she was put in the DP camp hospital. JDC, British Relief and other organizations came to the camp She planned to go to Palestine but had an uncle in the US. Could not go until 1946 as quota filled. She went to another DP camp, Tzalheim, near Frankfurt and later to other DP camps looking for friends. Stayed in Landsberg am Lech for a while an

met future husband. He went to the US in 1946 and she followed in 4/48. They were married in NYC in 9/48. Two sons.

As a survivor. She wanted to know how and why “my people were destroyed.” Became a student of history to help herself understand. Feels that if Israel had existed, Jews would have been sent there rather than being killed. Realizes that Christian antisemitism facilitated rise of Nazism. Wondered whether God exists in light of the destruction and abandonment by others. Speaks often to many groups and recommends reading The War Against the Jews-Lucy Dawidowicz, Harvest of Hate—Leon Poliakov, and especially Man’s Search for Meaning—Dr. Victor Frankel and Night—Elie Wiesel. Husband is a secular Jew, a Zionist with no real Jewish education. She was convinced by Rabbi Raskas to join a synagogue and she did join a conservative one. She likes being a Jew and being around other Jews. She stays in contact with other survivors, some of whom knew her family. Works with Hadassah, raises money for UJA and helps with resettlement of Soviet Jews as she speaks some Russian and Yiddish. She is on the board and a director of JFS. She knows the importance of oral history and spends time educating the Soviet refugees as they have little knowledge of the Holocaust.