

**RG-90.148.0037**

**Summary from Radio Kielce**

**Episode 37: Nothing is as strange as people can be – Marianna and Szczepan Hara, Rytwiany  
04.12.2018**

<https://polacyratujacyzydow.com.pl/en/nothing-is-as-strange-as-people-can-be-marianna-and-szczepan-hara-rytwiany/>

**Stories about Poles**

Marianna Hara - Righteous Among the Nations

Szczepan Hara - Righteous Among the Nations

**Help provided by Poles**

Janina, Irena and Michał Dyl

Irena Dyrzcz

Antoni Tutak

Regina Ślęzak-Gawlak

Katarzyna and Franciszek Brzyszc

Maria and Szczepan Gawęł

**The people who stayed in the hiding**

Elias Frydman (Freeman)

Szymon Rottenberg

Samuel Szaniecki

Meir Bydlowski

**The story told by**

Jan Hara - Marianna and Szczepan's son, the Righteous Among the Nations laureates

In 1996 there were the two ceremonies in Poland when the Righteous Among the Nations medals were presented to the representatives of the seven families from Rytwiany and Czajków.

More than 50 years earlier, during the Second World War all the medal laureates were all involved in helping a dozen or so Jews from Staszów ghetto.

The campaign was initiated by a young teacher – Irena Dyrzcz. She coordinated the Jews' escape from the ghetto. Helped by Maria and Szczepan Gawęł she also persuaded a group of Poles to shelter the refugees.

Marianna Hara and her husband Szczepan offered a hiding place for the Jews. According to Jan Hara, the son of the medal laureates, these were not his parents to make the decision. It was his grandfather Jan Kotlarz who decided that they would hide Jews on the farm as they had been friends long before the war. Together with his son-in-law, grandfathers dug a hiding place for them under the house floor. The floor entrance was covered with a bed. The Jews hid there in winter time.

According to Marianna Hara, Szymon Rottenberg – a photographer, Elias Frydman – a dentist and Meir Bydlowski were hidden in her house. The Yad Vashem website records show that Samuel Szaniecki also found shelter there.

Marianna Hara cooked dinners for those in the hiding. Her father, Jan Kotlarz and husband – Szczepan Hara took care of supplies. They bought food for money given by the Jews. Jews who were hiding in other places would also come to get meals.

Probably not only did the hidden Jews contact each other – Jan Hara recalls that his grandfather – Jan Kotlarz facilitated contacts. They also changed their hiding places and moved between the farms of Polish families involved. According to the testimonies published on the Yad Vashem website, Antoni Tutak hid Maurice Frydman (Freeman) and Alexander Erlichman. Maria and Szczepan Gaweł offered hiding for: Samuel Szaniecki, Szymon Rottenberg, Alexander Erlichman, Abe Sterbberg, Alexandra Frydman and Regina, Elias, Stefan and Maurice Frydman (Freeman). The same Frydmans were also hiding at Katarzyna and Franciszek Brzyszczy's, at Janina, Irena and Michał Dyls' and at Regina Ślęzak-Gawlak's nee Dyl.

Poles who saved Jews were threatened not only by the German occupiers, but also by the looters – groups of Poles who robbed houses. Such a group attacked Katarzyna and Franciszek Brzyszczy and demanded the Jews to be released. The Brzyszczy were beaten, but they did not disclose any information about those in the hiding. The Gawełs suffered a similar situation – Szczepan Gaweł was murdered. Despite this tragedy, no one let the secret out about the Jews. Other Poles who were involved in the help campaign did not cease. Thus they saved the hidden – say historians Ewa Kołomańska and dr Tomasz Domański.

All the hidden Jews survived the occupation time and then left the country."