

Stanley Joseph Oskwarek and Michalina Mitusinski were a married couple who lived in Poland during World War II. Stanley was born on May 31, 1919 in Omaha, Nebraska, and moved with his parents to Tarnow, Poland when he was a young boy. Michalina was born on October 29, 1921 in Polna, Poland. Stanley and Michalina were married on July 19, 1941 in Poland, where they quickly became caught in the middle of World War II.

During the war, Stanley focused on keeping himself and his family alive. He worked as an engineer and machinist on the Tarnow trains, and in one instance, he confronted two fleeing Germans who were about to drop a grenade into a church basement, saving at least a hundred people. As a US citizen, Stanley even tried to reach the US embassy in Warsaw to get a passport to flee to the United States, but when he got to Warsaw, the embassy had been closed. He was forced to give up his home in Tarnow in order for the SS to create the Tarnow ghetto. He was given another home previously owned by a Jewish family.

In December of 1945, Stanley was able to escape alone and sail on the SS Maritime Victory from France to Newport News, Virginia. He then worked for years in Derby, Connecticut, saving enough money to buy plane tickets to transport his wife and two children to the United States. These interviews of Stanley and Michalina share some of the horrors of living through German and Russian-occupied Poland. Michalina shares her childhood experiences with her close Jewish friends, describing their deep devotion to their faith. She shares the sad time when the SS forced her Jewish friends to leave their home, detailing that the horse would not go.

Michalina also shared how she learned acceptance and grace through her experiences. Despite the hardships and atrocities that she and her family faced during the war, Michalina was able to find solace in her faith and the support of her close friends. She learned to accept the difficult circumstances that she and her loved ones were in, and to show grace and compassion to those around her. Through her experiences, Michalina was able to grow and find strength in the face of adversity.