

A few years before Hitler invaded Russia and forced the Jews of Torczyn, into a ghetto, my uncles extracted their sisters' family and their mother from a Europe that was becoming increasingly racist and anti-Semitic.

We Jews are descendents of a tribe of people that exited Egypt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and then occupied a corner of the Middle East for over a thousand years. In 70 AD the land was ruled by the Romans. Groups of Jews periodically revolted and were repeatedly crushed. In 132 AD a third revolt was briefly successful, then a Roman army marched in and killed or exiled all the Jews who lived in the land. During the subsequent 1900 years Jewish communities existed in many parts of the world. Many Jews clung to their religion and traditions, while others assimilated and blended in. In some countries there were periods of racism and anti-Semitism, times when Jews became the visible disliked or hated "other". During the Crusades groups of soldiers marching to the Holy Land stopped to kill Jews. In 1492 the Christians ousted the Moors from Spain and expelled 300,000 Spanish Jews. In 16th to the 18th century, legally compulsory and physically enclosed exclusively Jewish enclaves—Ghettos—were established. In 1648 a Cossack named Bogdan Chmielnicki led a rebellion against Polish rule in the Ukraine and his men committed mass atrocities against the Roman Catholic clergy and the Jews. After the rebellion ended surviving Jews returned to the shtetls, towns and villages in Poland and Ukraine. In the 1800s Russia defeated Napoleon, and the Tsar ruled much of Eastern Europe. This book is chiefly a compilation of some of the memories of a family of St Louis and Illinois Jews who lived their early lives in Eastern Europe—and of relatives and friends who survived the holocaust. [www.ferdmanfredman.com](http://www.ferdmanfredman.com)