

A few years before Hitler invaded Poland, and later the Ukraine, my uncles extracted their sisters' family and their mother from a Europe that was becoming increasingly racist and anti-Semitic.

Then, in the early 1940s the Jews of their shtetl were gathered in a ghetto and taken to the Jewish cemetery where they were shot to death. They—we—were/are descendents of a tribe of people that exited Egypt in the 13th century BCE. Our ancestors occupied a corner of the Middle East for more than a thousand tumultuous years and were variously ruled by Jewish kings, Persian shahs, and Greek generals. In 70 AD their land was governed by Romans, and our people revolted three times. After the third revolt in 132 AD the land was attacked by a huge Roman army and the Jews were solidly defeated and exiled from the land.

At the time Jewish communities existed in many parts of the world and they survived. During the subsequent 1900 years some Jews assimilated and many clung to their religion and traditions,.

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, and in 1492 the Christians ousted the Moors from Spain and expelled 300,000 Spanish Jews. In 16th to the 18th century, physically enclosed Jewish enclaves—Ghettos—were established in many cities and in 1648 a Cossack named Bogdan Chmielnicki committed mass atrocities against the Roman Catholic clergy and the eastern European Jews. After the rebellion ended survivors returned to their shtetls--towns and villages in Poland and Ukraine. 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