

The Last Jew in Torczyn part 2

While he was in the underground tunnel, O and another young Jew Aaron Katko became friends. They formed a bond that lasted their entire lives.

Aaron was the third child of Anya and Eliezar (Lazar) Katko. Lazar was a leather worker and taught his son the craft. Aaron became a skilled and talented craftsman, so much so that Wallenshus, the German Kommandant of the Torczyn ghetto tried to keep him alive so that he, Wallenshus, could profit from Aaron's work. Wallenshus called Aaron "Sattler." (Some leather workers made Saddles.)



AARON, IS THE THIRD SON, AND IS STANDING TO HIS FATHER'S LEFT.

AARON WAS BORN IN 1921 AND WAS ABOUT 20 YEARS OLD WHEN THE GERMANS FIRST OCCUPIED TORCZYN.

In 1941 Germany invaded the Ukraine. Shortly thereafter forty able bodied men were picked, among them the father and brothers of Aaron Katz. With shovels on their shoulders they were taken to the woods of Boyan and forced to dig holes in the ground. Then they and 210 other young Jews were shot and thrown into the pits.

In 1942 the Jewish population of Torczyn was herded into a Ghetto.

Aaron apparently continued to ply his craft at a shop.

A Ukrainian farmer, Shanka Krutt lived behind the shop.

AARON: The Ukrainian was Shenkov (Shanka). He knew my father. He was a neighbor of ours. Early on he came there and he said, "Boys, what are you sitting? Make yourself a hiding place. Take shovels, make yourself something in case something, and I will give you, I'll feed you, don't worry about it."

And we started to dig under the basement.

We opened up the foundation. We were young. We didn't know. But Schieke Rosengut, he was an older guy, and he was the manager of that place.

So they were working (digging) about 6 weeks in there.

When we finish outside it was like a hill. We brought a toilet, an inside toilet from the ghetto.

The Jews would ask me why. I said the Kommandant said if we didn't clean up the place it's going to be terrible. We have to clean up and make a toilet there. I went with the guys that had been working and we picked up the best toilet, the nicest one, and we brought it in and digged a hole and we put the toilet down there.

And then later we connected the outside; and we had two boards, double boards; and we opened it up; and it was a door and we couldn't go down.

Aaron was not killed during the first mass murder "Scheeta" of the town's Jews.

AARON: Wallenshuss came to me. He wanted I should go and pick myself some bedding, like a pillow or something, I should have where to sleep, from the ghetto. Because in the ghetto they put together all those clothings and all the cushions and all those blankets. They put there in one room and the farmers used to buy them or take them away.

So we went there.

He said pick.

So I told him I don't need nothing.

He said you will need. Don't worry, you will need.

I was the only one who went with him.

I don't remember what I picked.

Over there I saw a bunch of clothing they brought from the cemetery where they were undressing.

And I found my mother's clothes and the passport.

I have the little picture.

I took out the picture and I have the little picture still there.



Then I went back to work and Wallenschus stayed in the ghetto.

The Gestapo came from Lusk on motorcycles and they grabbed anybody, any Jew they caught. The Gestapo guys were complete strangers. (Aaron only knew Wallendschus, Knie, and Gustav.)

They went to the ghetto and said they're making passports. They're going to give out passports. Everybody should go to the big shul; they're going to give out pass ports. They took everybody.

They came to the building where Aaron was working and they took they bookkeeper. They took everybody they could.

AARON: When I saw this happening me, Shuster and another two guys went into the basement, into the cellar, and hid there. And they took away everybody they grabbed. I hid that night, me and those three others; we went to the Zadowa woods.

When I came in three days later from the woods I got tired. I am sitting there.

I thought: They going to come. They going to kill me anyway.

So I paid a farmer's boy. I had a few shirts on me. I gave him two shirts.

That farmer's boy told me there is by Gulenevich some Jews around there and it's quiet.

So I figure let's go back to the city. And I got tired of it.

And I and the guy with me, Froim Shuster, came to the city at night.

I stood on the Scheune, where they keep the grain.

We went on the roof and we slept over.

In the morning I looked. I see a few Jewish people there. I thought I'm going to go down. I'm going to show myself.

I came down and they said: Oh good. You're here. Wallendschus is looking for you.

He looked between the dead ones and you weren't there.

He said if you see the Sattler tell him to come to the city.

I put a few apples on top of a little bag and I walked to the ghetto.

The Ukrainian police caught me and they said: Three times they killing. You still alive.

He asked me what do I got.

I said Apples.

Open up.

So I opened up.

He looked at the apples and at the bottom.

It was thread.

So he gave me a kick. He hit me.

And he took me. He said I have to go too.

He brought me to Wallendshcuss.

Wallendshus looked at me and he smiled.

He was holding his hands like this on the steps and he smiled and he said okay, leave him out.

And he said you go too. I should go and take a shave and wash around and if you want.

You can take off your patch. Now your going to stay for a while so don't be afraid.

He tells the Ukrainian he shouldn't hit me.



I was already disgusted so I told him it will come to the Ukrainian police; and I told him it will come a black day for you like it came for me.

He want to hit me.

He said don't you hit him.

I went to Kwaitkovski, the secretary there and I took a shave and I went to work.

And that's when Wallendschus said: Do not run. If there will be any Jews in Torchin it will be you.

In the days following the Scheeta and its aftermath Aaron lived above ground and brought food to the boys hidden underground

I got plenty of food. I used to give the goyim leather and they used to bring me food: an apple, a piece of ham, all kinds of things I used to make them. Because I had leather with me. And goyim for leather that time they would give away. I could make a fortune. Aaron was able to stay above ground and sleep in the shop at first. Then he too had to hide.

O picks up the story:

O: We lived there for about 4 months underground. In the spring it started to get hot. We couldn't stay there. We went out and joined the partisans.

We stayed in Shanka Krutt's catacombs for 4 months. Torchin was a town. It was dangerous to go out of our hiding place at night. Someone might see us. We didn't leave our hiding place during the entire four months.

In April the heat was impossible, and we moved. We had a friend named Shiganovsky. He was a Pollack, and he was against the Germans and the Ukrainians. He lived in Boyan, a village of 2 to 3 houses. He dug a catacomb near his house. He covered his door with hay and put a dog in a dog house on top of it. To get in you had to open the door of the dog house, take the dog off, take the straw off, and then go in. We stayed there quite a few months. Boyan was a village and while we stayed there we used to go out at night. We hunted for food. We ate raw potatoes and apples. We got diarrhea. And we survived.

Finally a war started between the Polish and Ukrainian partisans. I burn your village. You burn my village. The Germans promised the Ukrainians a homeland, and they didn't deliver.

We were underground, but we realized something was in turmoil in the area.

So we went to another place. We stayed with a man named Roarin Nishinka. He was a rebel ... against anybody, an adventurer, a Ukrainian. A good soul. He told Shika Rosengood to bring the boys. There were twelve of us. Two were women, one of whom got killed.



Nishinka said, "I'll dig a hideout at my place." He had a dog there, and a dog house. And after we went into the catacomb he covered it up.

The partisans started to organize. We got into the partisans. This guy's brother, Pietka Nishinka was a member of the organization. Any Jew who was against

Resistance Chagall 1937-48

the Ukrainian Nationalists and the Germans was an accepted member. And I was accepted. We fought with them, and they fought with us until the liberation. During that time we moved from place to place. Villages like Okonsk, Yablonky, Bereznizka. We put mines under bridges. We cut telephone posts. The partisans got the mines from the Russians. I slept places where they brought in a bundle of straw, put it on the floor, and lay there.

We slept on dirt floors in people's houses. We used to go to Ukrainians homes at night. We had to eat. My Ukrainian was perfect.

We came to Kodakakovsky, a heavy built guy. We knocked on the door.

He said "who is it?"

I changed my voice and said "your friends came over here." I said we were Ukrainian nationalists.

He said, "C'mon fellow. I have something to eat for you. Something to eat. Help yourself."

After we got in we cleaned out. We took bread, flour, honey, apples. We had to eat, to support twelve people and Nishinka.

When we left he said "next time come over when it gets dark. You scared the hell out of me. I still love you. I'll work with you anytime."

We came to another guy's place, Yakob's place. We took bread and whatever he had to eat. He had a helper. I told the helper to get the horses.

The helper said "Boys, please have mercy. My boss is so good to me. He likes me. I want to work for him. Don't take me with you. Don't kill him."

Aaron said "Get the horses"

And the helper didn't want to do it.

So Aaron took out his whip and hit him a few times.

He said, "OK, I'm going to do it."

We loaded the meat and bread, potatoes. We brought it home on time. We hit the horses so they would run away.

Other Jewish Partisans

The Germans invaded Russia on June 22, 1941. Their army quickly rolled through Eastern Poland, the Ukraine and deeper into Russia. The Russian resistance stiffened. The German army was stopped and after a 2 year long struggle, the Germans were defeated at Stalingrad. By 1944 the Russians had recaptured Torchin. We survived the war.



The following is a group of survivors, now scattered in Germany.



יהושע ראזענגארטען

יצחק אלעיניק

יוסף נודעלמאן

דוד משרת

הערשעל קאפמאן

משה קאטקע

משה פעפער

האסקעל סעלצער

(After the war) we came to Lutsk, near Torchin. A group of Jews were sitting around, telling stories about the war. And a guy named Sallee Lakech got up. He said that during the war he was working for a guy named Yacob. "And the Ukrainian Nationalists came over. They cleaned out the house. They wanted to kill my boss. And he didn't know that I'm Jewish. I went through hell at the hands of the Ukrainian bandits. There was a tall one and



a short one with a whip. I still have blisters. Boy, if he would have found out that I was a Jew.”

I used to call his name Virichuk.

He said “How would you know what my name was when I worked for my boss?”

I said do you remember when we put him on the floor and put an egg on your boss’ back, and we told him it was a grenade. If he moved it was going to explode?”

He said, “Oh my God. It was you.”

I said “If I knew it was you I would have taken you with us.” He said “I’m glad you didn’t.” He started to cry.

Jewish Parisians WW II

I was with the partisans for a year and a half.

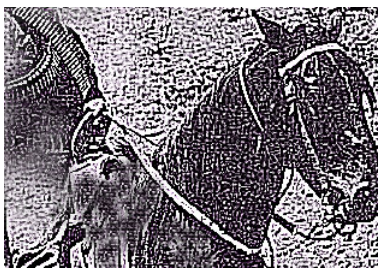
The Germans were retreating already. When the Russians caught up with the partisans they told us they were going to send us to Czechoslovakia. They were going to drop us by parachute.

I thought, after so many years of fighting and hiding, I wouldn’t make it. My leg was swollen. I couldn’t walk.

I got out of it.

I had 2 or 3 guns. (Before I left Torchin, after the war, the Russian commander, Korokov, made sure the guns were registered, and that I didn’t have to give them back..

He said, “O”, if you go to America, I don’t blame you. If you go to Poland they won’t give you a cold cup of water.”)



After Torchin was liberated I rode into Torchin. I was riding a horse. I came with a few Ukrainian partisans.

I knocked on Shanka’s door.

Shanka’s wife was excited. “Shanka, my God, Shanka. Itzka is alive.”

I took off my automatic pistol. I layed it down. I said “Shanka, I survived.”

He embraced me. He started to kiss and hug me. He said “My son. I don’t know what to do with you. You’ll be in my house as long as you want. I’m so glad you’re alive. At least I did my share.”

A goniff like that talks about God

“God listens to my wife’s prayers.”

He didn’t say his prayer.

I fell on the mass grave. And I said with a cry Yisgadāl v’Yiskādāsh. I asked forgiveness of the people who were killed. “Please forgive me dear parents, sisters, brothers, friends, colleagues, that I have survived.” I did not survive because I was smart or strong. It just happened. Fate. A Miracle. Maybe there should have been someone alive, a witness from our city of Torchin to say a prayer over the dead, to say

kaddish and keep Yurtzeit, and to be able to tell Jews in the U.S. and the world over in future generations what has happened to us. That you martyrs couldn't understand why it happened.

And I went from the cemetery to the town. The Ukrainians saw me with an automatic weapon in my hands. They crossed themselves because they thought I have risen from the other world.

They said "Oh "O". Are you still alive?"

Right away I went to Shanka Krutt. And after that to another man (Yonishenka) one of the righteous people of the world. They were Christians who helped save me. They cried from happiness and thanked God that I was alive.

Most of the rest of the goyim tried to be nice ... but they didn't mean it. They were afraid that I would reveal their sins, their collaboration with the Germans, and their participation in the sheetchah, the slaughter.

The front was near Torchin. There was not the proper time to take revenge or to bring the collaborators to trial. The time came a few weeks after that when a few more Jews who survived among the partisans, from the dugouts, etc. (returned to Torchin.) Among them Shrulig Stern (he's in Israel) Aaron Keitka. Shonen Toiga, he's in Canada.

Yuska Rosenfeld (his brother is editor of the Maariv.) They were going to take Yuska to his grave. The Ukrainian police arrested him. They got close to Favish Krywat's store. He figured he was going to be killed. He bent down and grabbed a handful of sand, and he threw it into the policeman's eyes. And the policeman was blind. He couldn't see anything. That's how he escaped. He is in Israel now.

Bella Kafka, Shika Rosengod were others.

Then we turned over all the bandits to the Russian authorities and we thought to ourselves, all your enemies should have that sentence. But that was a drop in the ocean in comparison to what the murders had done to our people. During the war the idea of survival, the ego to survive, was so great, I couldn't get rid of my need to survive. The disappointment was great. The gentiles went to their churches, masking their faces and their deeds under the name of the cross. They became so-called wonderful citizens.

They collaborated with the German murderers in every aspect of life. Especially when it came to killing Jews and obtaining their wealth. They burned all the synagogues. They made under linings for their boots from the Torahs. I recognized clothing of my friends and relatives with whom we have strived and felt certain ideals of life. And we always hoped for a better world. Who can forget such ideal children like Tzivia and Channa Nudleman, Buzia Amel, Jennie Hochman, Fayge



Michnick. She could repeat in Russian a poem after the teacher said it once. Her memory was that good.

Tzivia Shapira, Kriz Lashner, Annie Molyavan; Badel Shel, Mannie Finklesteen, Label Stern, a brilliant mind. Moishe Drizen; and many others. The beloved and the good ones in their life. Even in their deaths they were not separated. Pity and sorrow for those who should be remembered. But they are not forgotten.

The local authorities tried to remodel the Jewish homes. I thought to myself, you can rebuild a city from disaster, but you can't bring back our parents, sisters, and brothers.



The day is gone. The night approached. From under the skeletons of the homes

there has arisen a pale moon. And she has scattered her rays all over the territory.

I was at Shanka Krutts house. I turned away from the window, and I no longer saw the moon. I stretched out on my so-called bed and I tried to fall asleep. But I arose immediately. I have seen the cruelty of the sleepless night. And I have decided to meet them in a manner that was not holiday like. The night hours have changed. Exactly like the heavy load of the night. All the weight fell on the shoulders of one who survived from Torchin. Who got straight into that room, who gave his shoulders to support the heavy weight of the whole night?



"O", "O", do you remember the days from far childhood, when father and mother, sisters and brothers stood together by your side. When you became sad and you didn't know why. I was shattered like a tree that you shake to get its food. And the tree gets stubborn and doesn't want to give up the fruit.

I heard shots on the front near Torchin. Everything was banal, empty, cold, and sad.

I tried with all my strength to fall asleep. That same night I had a dream about my mother. She said to me: My child. You have to live. This was your parent's

prayer to God. Remember that you had parents. They perished for the name of God. Don't forget that you are a Jew.

I don't remember how long that dream lasted. I'll remember them in my heart all my life. The Gemorra says there are dreams that make no sense. Some dreams have meanings.

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Shanka his wife (?Marishka) and O



family.

I was liberated by the Russians after the Germans left. The Russians came into Torchin in 1944. The Russian government knew me. The local people knew me. I never belonged to the Communist Party. I never belonged to the young Konsumal.

Shanka had fed twelve of us food, free of charge, for 4 months. And that's the mentality of a goniff.

After the war the Russians wanted to take Shanka to the army or put him in jail. He was famous. I went to the Russians. I was in a good position with them. I told him who he is, what he did.

They couldn't believe it.

I saved him. His sons didn't have to go into the army. I gave him my other house. I left him money and all the clothing that I had left over from my

After the war I was about the only one left until the last minute. Most of the Jews started writing letters. Even your cousin Mischa wrote a letter, from Shanghai,

not to me, but he wrote a letter to a fellow by the name of Anatole Krevsky. The post office box was 581, Shanghai. Anatole gave me the letter. Misha was asking about his mother, about Rifka, about Rafuel, and about the rest of the family. So I answered Mischa's letter. I told him what happened.

The same thing with Kopman. Kopman was Moshe Kopman's son. The Russian sent him to Siberia for one crime. His father was a rich man. He was married to Hershel Yuchtz daughter. He had a child with her. She was killed. The child was killed. He was in Russia in a coal mine somewhere

Kopman wrote me a letter from Russia. Who's left of the family?

So I had to tell him the truth of what happened. I told him to emigrate. There's no future for him in Russia. Why does he want to stay there?

He came to Germany from Poland. There was an exchange between Stalin and Roosevelt, and Churchill. Most of the citizens of the western Ukraine who were born and raised in the Ukraine and Poland could go back to their homes. I don't know what the reciprocation was. Anyway Hershel Kopman comes over one day to Torchin. He wore a long Kapote with a Stubel. "O". What happened?" He was crying.

I said "Hershel, we have to face reality. This is it." I told him what happened to his wife, child and the rest of the family. He had a sister Radzia. She was married to Harochen. And his brother-in-law was Baruch Shapria.

So what is he going to do? Stay in Torchin?

He went to Lutsk, from Lutsk to Kiretz, to Gedansk, to Lemberg. In Lemberg he crossed the border. He went to Poland; from Poland to Austria; From Austria to Germany. In Germany I met him several times at the scurra. He married a nice woman from Shulka in Poland.

WITEMAN ON MOTORCYCLE



When I left Torchin I went to the cemetery and said a Kaddish. I was the last Jew. I could either commit suicide or stay in Torchin and be assimilated. And I couldn't do that.

I worked for a year in Torchin for the Russians. I worked in Boruch Moshe Malkas house. Eight or nine Jews returned. They left a few months before me. In the end there was not a single Jew alive. I was a Russian government employee. I collected grain from the farmers: wheat, hay, eggs, straw. Then I realized I had no future there, although I had a good position.

With the Russian government you have to leave in a way that they can't pursue you, they cannot catch you. If they find out ahead of time that you are planning to leave, your plans are void.

There was a Russian Jew, a captain, by the name of Witeman. They sent him from the Ukraine to Torchin to organize people for the army. The war was still going on. He came to

Shanka's house. I used to sleep there. He came over and he said "Yitzhak get out of here ... run. I'm from Kiev. My family was wiped out by the Ukrainian bandits. I have nothing to lose. But you are a young man. Run away from that tyranny. I know what the Germans have done to your parents, what they did to all the Jews, but even under the Russian occupation, if you want to go to the toilet you have to have a permit.

He said "take me with you." I tried to make him papers. At the last minute he changed his mind. He said "Kinderlach, I like you. Where am I going to go? I don't have any relatives abroad. My life is finished."

I went to the cemetery. And Shanka Krutt, the man who saved my life and the lives of 12 other Jews embraced me. He said "Go away. But I hope you will be in touch with me. I have done the best I can for you. You're going to a free world. Here you're going to the cemetery every day. You're crying. You will not be normal. There is not a Jew in Torchin to talk with you. What are you doing here?"

I left in 1945 with Witeman's help. He told me, he

WITEMAN



says, "Get up. Get out of here. You have to go to the bathroom now. You need a probusk. You have to get permission to go to the toilet. Get out. I'm a party member. If not I wouldn't have this job. Get out.

"I'll tell you what to do. The Russian authorities are sending you to Kiev for four weeks. You address a letter to me in Torchin. And you write there that I have arrived safely. I am beginning to study. I miss you all. I hope to see you soon. And so and so.

I'm going back to Kiev. I will mail it at the post office in Kiev. It will come back to Torchin. This is the way you are going to get out."

I gave him the letter. He took it to Kiev. He mailed that letter in Kiev at the post office. He sent it back to Torchin. And they thought that I'm in Kiev, that I'm studying.

Meanwhile I had papers made out. I paid Stadnichenko to make out the papers. He

was a Russian. He sold his soul. He said "I don't give a damn. The life I have here;

I couldn't care less. I want to live. This is what it is going to cost you.

I went from Torchin to Lutsk by horse and wagon. From Lutsk I took the train to Kobla. Kobla is one of the cities that has 8 railroad crossings. In Kobla I got into the train. I came to the border. I crossed to Poland. From Poland I went to Czechoslovakia. To a small town called Polizanadmatui. I happen to know the Czechoslovakian language. We had a lot of Czechs in our surrounding area. A Czech policeman called me and started to talk to me in Czechoslovakian. And I answered him in Czechoslovakian. He examined my false papers and said "OK".

I started smuggling Jews out of Poland. From Poland to Czechoslovakia, From Czechoslovakia we sent them to Austria; from Austria to Germany; and so on. I did that for quite a few months.

I went to Czechoslovakia to Austria, to Vienna, to Rothschild's house .. where the D.P.'s stay. From there we crossed the border by night, by train. They were all bribed. We went to Germany.

In Germany I was supply and messing officer of the U.N. rehabilitation administration in Kassel. I used to issue trip tickets for Studebaker trucks to go to Munich, to bring eggs and potatoes.

I got in with the Irgun Zvi Leumi. That was in '46. We used to smuggle. I issued trip tickets to smuggle weapons to Munich. From Munich the Irgun expedited it to Israel. I had a machsan underground in Kassel. In it I had machine pistols and binoculars and some other things. I sent them to Israel.

After that I was getting ready to go to Israel. I got a letter from Bill Chopnick, from New York. "I found out that your mother has a sister in Brooklyn. She wants to see you. She's crying. If you want to go to Israel, you can go from the United States to Israel."

So I was alone. I figured who do I have? I figured I'm going to see my mother's sister, my aunt. I came to Brooklyn. I started to work for an import- export organization that sells chassis overseas.

Then Harry Fredman came to New York for some kind of celebration. And I was there. He was wearing a straw hat. He said "Landsman, I know your parents. I remember this and that. Come to Peoria. If you don't like it you can come back to New York."



Then the war started in Korea. They called me to the draft. Your relative, Madje Kaufman said "It's mashiga. Go away."

I said "I don't have anyone in Israel. Where am I going to go." I had a cousin in Argentina. Itzik Maeshte. So I went to Argentina. I was in Argentina for 3 months, and in 3 months I learned the Spanish language.

While I was there I met my cousin Itzik's brother's daughter Rifka. She was nice. I was in love with the girl. I wanted to marry a hamishe maidel. But it didn't work out. So I returned to the U.S.

Rifka went to Israel because she had 2 brothers in Israel. So I went to Israel. I'm a soft character. I suffered. But it didn't work out.

One day I said "that's the end of it. This is it." I was getting to get ready to come back to the U.S.

So Rina's uncle, Rabbi Bernstein, met me in Tel Aviv. A Litvak. He said "O", voos echtzik, voos echtzik?"

I said "Rabbi. Nothing. It didn't work."

He said, "Come over tonight. Chavele, my Chavele isn't feeling well."

I said “Rabbi, I’ll come over; but I’m leaving the end of the week.”
He said “Come over one night.”

I came over that night to visit him. He was very good to me. In Germany we worked together in the same ZOA. I was talking to him and his wife that night. Chava opened the door, and Rina came in with her mother. That Rabbi is Rina’s uncle. I looked at her and I said to myself “Uh Oh, I’m stuck.”

Eleven O’clock at night I took her home, and it started to rain. It poured. So her mother said

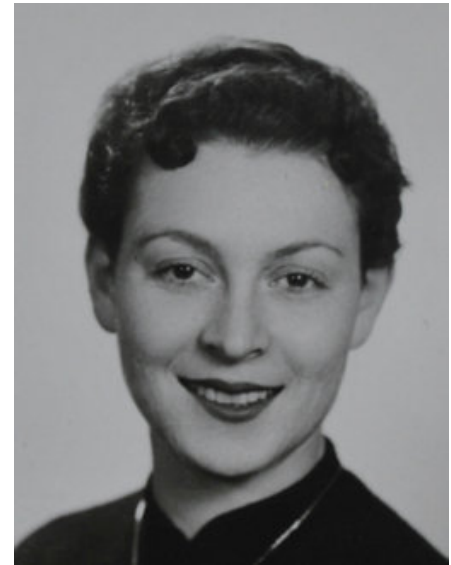
“How can we let him go? It’s raining so much.”

I waited in the house a half an hour or so. The rain stopped.

I said “I’ll go home.” But I had seen the harmony between Rina’s father and mother. In my life time I never saw anything like it. I figured this is it. I went to the American Consulate, and I wrote a letter. I prolonged my stay.

They sent her to an officer’s course. She played hard to get.

And after a while we married.



After I departed Torchin I corresponded with Shanka Krutt, the man who saved my life. And once I said “Shanka, by the way, do you remember the last time I was in your house. You had that Polish taxi driver. His name was Obitzki. He is still in Torchin. He took that German commander from Torchin to Germany to his parents, to his home, wherever it was. If you get a chance would you ask him where he took the German ... at least the city.”

It took quite a few months. Shanka wrote me a letter back. He said “I knew how to approach Obitzki. I talked to him. I invited him to dinner. He told me he took him to Hanover.”

I figured it’s the American zone. I’m an idiot. If I would have known. When I was in Kassel, in Germany, I was about 100 miles from him. Maybe the Irgun could have gotten him. Who knows?

So I wrote a letter to Wiesenthal’s office. I told them about Wallenshuss, the commander of the Torchin Ghetto. If you want to know who he is ... if a child was crying, hungry, starved to death, the child was told by a mother, father, or any other member of the family: “Wallenshuss is going”.

The child quit crying.

So you can imagine what it meant to a child to hear the name Wallenshuss. He was one of the biggest bastards Torchin has known.

Going back to Aaron Katz. The reason he kept him to the last minute was because he made a saddle for the horse.

Wiesenthal started to work on it. They wrote letters back and forth. Eight months ago they phoned me. They found him in Hanover.

I almost collapsed. I said I can tell you one thing; he had a golden tooth here, in the front. I knew what he was doing in Torchin. He was the organizer of the ghetto. He was a criminal. But if you fly me back to Germany to be a witness I'll probably collapse.

He said, "What about your friend Aaron Katz?"

I said, "Yes, he knows him better than I do. He saw him every day."

So the German general counsel in New York called Aaron Katz. He made a deposition of all the facts. Memorizing most of the details that he knew about him. He



even told them that Wallenshuss had a cut on his finger at the side. He was cutting leather. He wanted to do it himself. Aaron had to give him a band aid. Aaron said I can do something else. I can even sign his signature the way he used to sign it on the Ausweiss, on the certificate ...who's going to be alive ... who's going to be

dead.

● and Aaron Katko

It took two days for Aaron to testify. They called him there and they made out papers for him to get a round trip ticket to go to Germany to testify. They arrested Wallenshuss.

Aaron called me back. He says you want to know what happened? That bastard died in jail. They arrested him. He told them he remembers me. He used to call me saddler. He said he didn't know that I was alive. He would probably be scared stiff. The prosecutor was talking about him.

Wallenshuss said, "Can he say anything bad about me? I never hit him. I was good to him. I told him to hide."

I told him “What about the rest of the Jews in Torchin?”

In memory of the family of O

Mordechai father

Sara Sosna mother

Children:

Freyda. Born 1916

Bracha born 1918

Chisia born 1920

Ezekial born 1924

Moshae born 1926

Bella born 1928

See small section on Rina in chapter 34.09

From the files of the Beth Hatefutsot, the diaspora museum in Ramat Aviv
Israel:

TORCHIN

(POL. TORCZYN), TOWN IN SOUTHERN VOLYN OBLAST, UKRAINE. TORCHIN PASSED TO RUSSIA IN 1795. IN 1648--49 THE JEWS SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE COSSACKS UNDER CHMIELNICKI. BECAUSE OF THEIR ECONOMIC PLIGHT, THE COUNCIL OF THE FOUR LANDS GRANTED THE COMMUNITY A REDUCTION IN TAX IN 1726. THE JEWISH POPULATION NUMBERED ABOUT 640 IN 1765. DURING THE 19TH CENTURY VARIOUS BRANCHES OF CRAFTS WERE DEVELOPED WHOSE PRODUCTS WERE SOLD ON THE RUSSIAN MARKETS. IN 1890 THERE WERE 21 TANNERIES AND 66 SHOPS IN THE TOWN, MOST OF THEM OWNED BY JEWS. THE JEWISH POPULATION NUMBERED 1,748 IN 1847, 2,629 (58% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION) IN 1897, AND 1,480 (46%) IN 1921. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS, IN INDEPENDENT POLAND, ALL THE JEWISH PARTIES WERE ACTIVE IN THE TOWN, AS WELL AS A BRANCH OF HE-CHALUTZ, A SPORT ASSOCIATION, AND A LIBRARY. BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II THERE WERE ABOUT 1,600 JEWS IN TORCZYN. IN SEPTEMBER 1939 THE RED ARMY ENTERED THE TOWN AND A SOVIET ADMINISTRATION WAS ESTABLISHED THERE UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET WAR IN JUNE 1941. THE GERMANS OCCUPIED THE TOWN ON JUNE 24, 1941. IN JANUARY 1942 THE JEWS FROM TORCZYN AND ITS VICINITY WERE CONCENTRATED IN A CLOSED GHETTO IN THE TOWN. THE GHETTO WAS LIQUIDATED AT THE END OF AUGUST 1942 AND MOST OF THE JEWS WERE SHOT IN THE JEWISH CEMETERY. DURING THIS AKTION SOME JEWS SUCCEEDED IN HIDING AND ANOTHER GROUP IN ESCAPING AND JOINING A PARTISAN UNIT THAT OPERATED IN THE VICINITY. AFTER THE WAR, THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF TORCZYN WAS NOT RECONSTITUTED.