

Sheindel Goldfarb



Market Day Hrubieszow 1925



Front row: ronia (sister) woman; Hannah (sister) pre war woman

A yellow stained picture from pre war **Hrubieszow**  
We don't know who this is



Avraham Goldfarb and family pre war

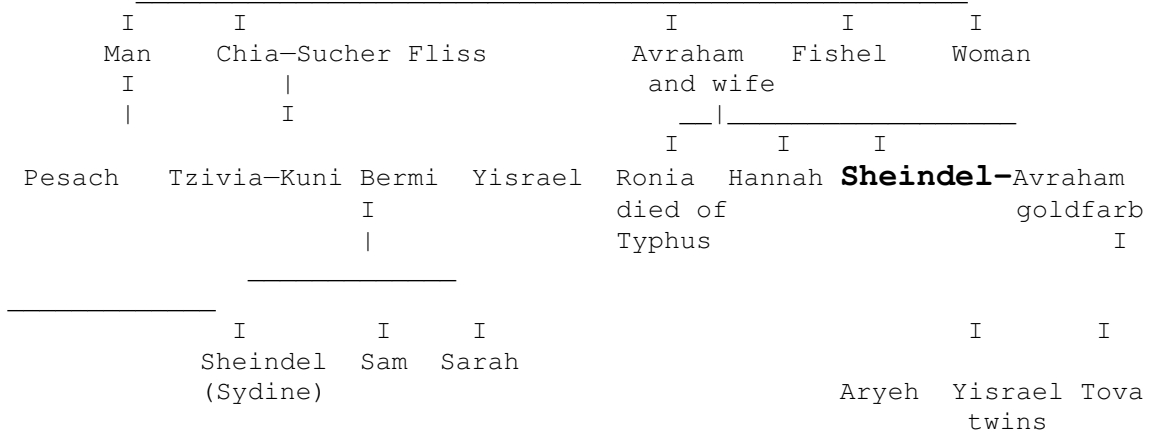


The Klein girls and friends pre war

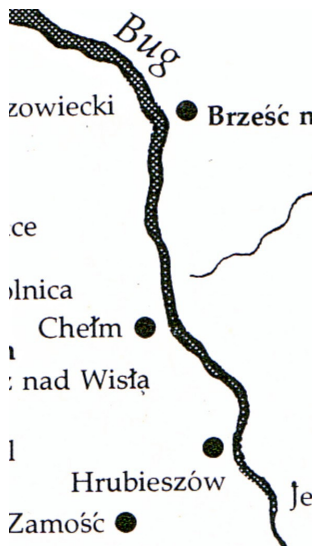
AVRAHAM'S SISTER PREWAR?



Common parents (Klein)



Sucher Tzivia Chia (Sarah in front) 1920s



Sheindel (Klein) Goldfarb was trapped in Poland during WW II. Her memories of that painful period in her life consist of a series of images, events, and feelings that are alternately compressed and elongated so that

moments became eternities and years disappeared in an instant.

We lived in **Hrubieszow**

(a small town S E of Warsaw) When the Germans occupied our town they moved my family from our house. We were settled in another

part of town. I was perhaps 18 when they began moving the Jews of our town to the camps. One day they took my parents.

I remember being collected to be sent to the camps. I ran away twice. I ran zig-zag like someone who was sick. Others ran too. They shot at us but they didn't chase us. They had time. They knew there would be more collections and more transports.

One winter day. My parents were already gone. Snow was falling. They gathered us outside. My sisters were there. The air was cold. I wore a brown coat with a white collar. I had a pilot's hat on my head, the kind that covers your ears and has a leather band that snaps beneath your chin.

The SS man told me to take my hat off.

I said "No."

"Why?" he asked.

"It's cold."

(She's going to die and she worries about being cold.)

"Stupid goose. If you die it doesn't matter if you are warm or cold."

He took out his pistol and hit me on the head. My sisters were standing nearby. They yelled: "Don't kill our sister." He stopped.

Another time I was in prison. I heard them taking my sisters away. I ran and yelled: "Don't kill my sisters:" I pushed at the door. I heard my sister call out: "Sheindel you must live for our parents and our family."

I heard the voice of the rabbi's wife. "Sheindel you must live for the memory of your parents."

One day I stood with the Jews of our town near the train station. They were about to take us to the camps. I had escaped twice and I was ready to run again. The Ukrainian guard who stood nearby (The Ukrainians were often worse than the Nazis) saw that I was going to try to escape. He came up to me and said "Are you going to run?"

"Just turn your back."

"Where will you run to? Where can you go?" he asked.

I looked in both directions. In one direction there was an SS man wearing a civilian suit. His hands were in his pockets. That meant he was holding a gun. He watched us. He saw how I stood. He knew I wanted to run. He was ready, waiting to shoot me. He was the man who took my parents away.

This time I decided not to run. I boarded the transport. My first camp was in Poland. The population of the camp included 1 million men and half a million women.

Periodically a train arrived to take some of us away. Then there was a selection: They took the old and sickly first.

The young and healthy escaped. I survived the selection for several months.

And then one day I was on the train to Auschwitz. There were 5 of us on the train, 5 girls from my home town, 5 friends who had escaped many selections.

We arrived in Auschwitz at 11 O'clock at night. It was winter, 1944.

We were standing in a round enclosure without a roof. There was deep mud on the ground. The sky was red. The air was filled with the odor of cooked meat. We knew what the glow and the smell meant. We knew what was happening, but we didn't talk about it.



They told us to undress. We stood there naked, waiting when a woman guard appeared. She had high boots and a short skirt. It was Regina, a girl I knew, a girl from our town. She had been Jewish. She was married and had 5 children when the Nazi's came. They took her parents away. They herded the Jews into a small section of the town. And she made a decision. She wore a cross. She became the mistress of an SS man. She was very beautiful.

The SS man's wife found out about Regina. The wife told Regina to leave.

Regina said: "Where should I go. I have no papers."

The wife got Regina a passport and told her, to go to Switzerland.

Regina went. She managed to get to the Swiss border, But they stopped her and sent her to Auschwitz, not as a Jew but as a Christian.

Regina survived the war. I know this because I saw her again at a DP camp in Germany after the war.

She again said "I'm finished being a Jew." She married an Englishman and She now lives in England, if she still is alive.

Regina gave us scissors. We cut each others hair. She gave us food.

Then she brought us to Mengele's hospital. That, was the last time we saw her until after the war.

There were other people from Hrubieszow on our train. There was one couple, 2 older people, who arrived with us. Regina hid them in a corner for a while and brought them food. But that was all she could do for them. She knew they were old and that they could not escape the selection.

We spent the next days...or weeks, I don't know... in Mengele's hospital. Mengele was blond and short. Three times a day he came with 30 or 40 doctors and looked at us. We stood naked in a line. I didn't look at his face. If we appeared to be healthy he held his arm straight out at shoulders level. If we looked thin, gaunt, sickly his arm went down. That meant death. He did all kinds of experiments on the Jews. I don't want to talk about it.

Eventually we left the hospital and we were sent to the camp itself. I was there for about a month. Twice daily they selected those who were to go to the gas chambers. Only a few hundred escaped extermination each time. It was hard to stay alive there for very long.

I kept my will to live in large part because of the girls from Hrubieszow who were friends. We arrived at the camp together and somehow we managed to escape, to survive the selections during those early weeks at Auschwitz.

I remember...

Once we were ordered to take showers. Most of the people took quick showers. The water was cold. We were the last and we took a long shower. When we arrived they had selected their quota. We were left for another time.

Once they selected us; all 5; altogether they chose 100 people for something. We looked at one another and realized that everyone seemed young and healthy. We asked what we were chosen for. The guard told us we were picked to give blood, blood for the German soldiers. We knew what that meant. They were going to bleed us to death. We ran. The German soldiers laughed. "If not this 100 another 100. If not today, tomorrow."

Once I was wondering around the camp and I saw a man from my home town. He was usually friendly, warm, asked me how I felt, how I was doing. But today he looked right past me. His stare was cold, straight, intense. The object of his gaze was his sister. She was standing next to the electrified fence that circled the camp. There were 30 or 40 others standing next to her. The guards in the towers were looking at them. Their guns were raised. I started running. 5 seconds later the gun fire began. Everyone was shot down. I escaped.

Once we were selected for the gas chambers and we ran. They came after us. There were shots. I came to a building. If I ran up the stairs I would be an easy target. The down stairs led to the men's barracks, an area forbidden to women. I

ran downstairs. and into the barracks. It was empty. All the men were in the yard being selected.

I hid and waited. At first there was silence, then a voice. "Sheindel?"

It was one of the 5 girls. All 5 of our group were in the barracks. All 5 had escaped again.

But as the days and nights passed, as I lived through 2 selections a day I began to realize that no one was going to leave Auschwitz alive. It was only a matter of time until they killed me. How many times could I escape? And Why? Was I any better than my sisters, or my parents? Why should I live?

When the American bombers flew over the camp the Germans would fall to the ground. They were frightened. They yelled at us to lie down. I didn't. I wasn't afraid. I preferred to be killed by an American bomb than by a German.

Then one day as the 5 of us were wandering around the camp We saw one of the German officers from our first concentration camp.

His was not a friendly face, but it was a familiar one, And for some reason the 5 of us ran up to him and called out "Herr Obermeister fuherer. Herr Obermeister fuherer. "

He was pleased to see us. He had been sent to Auschwitz to gather 150 healthy prisoners to work in a nearby textile factory. When he arrived at Auschwitz and told the SS guards; they didn't believe him. They didn't believe he was a guard from another camp. They thought his story was a fabrication. They-assumed he was a deserter from the Eastern front. They were going to shoot him if he couldn't prove he was telling the truth.

We confirmed his story. We saved him and he saved us. He took the 5 of us with him to his factory in Czechoslovakia. When that factory closed we were taken to a second factory, an airplane factory. And when that factory closed they took us to still another factory. There were 9 in all. We worked hard. To not work hard or to fall ill meant death. The food was meager, but we managed.

One day we heard bombs and explosions nearby. We thought it meant the end of us. The German in charge of the factory came to us. He said: "you are free to go."

We fell to the ground. "Where are we to go? Who do we have?" we began to yell.

Our shouts frightened him. He ran away. Later the Russian soldiers arrived. They told us we were free to go wherever we wished.

We returned to **Hrubieszow**. I visited my old house. A Ukrainian family lived there. It hadn't changed. The rocking chair and table looked like they did the day we left.

Later we were at the house of a Jewish doctor. He spent the war with the partisans. He took out his violin and played a beautiful tune. I loved it. He told us to go to a camp in Germany and from there to Israel. We asked him why he wasn't coming. He said the Russians wouldn't let him go. He was an important doctor. And besides his wife was 6 months pregnant.

I met Avraham at the camp. He was a man from **Hrubieszow**. He was older than I was. He was a goldsmith, a good, kind man; an artist, a metal worker.

One day they were killing Jews in **Hrubieszow** by clubbing them to death. Avraham was in a church. He quickly fashioned a cross from metal. The German came. He raised his club.

Avraham opened his hand. "I have a present for you.

"Who made this?" the German asked.

"I did."

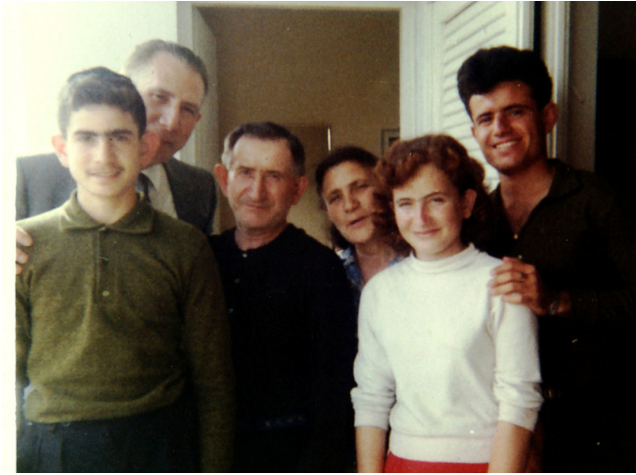
The German was impressed. The Germans had much gold. "Can you make more?"

"Whatever you wish. Just give me 10 Jewish men to help me."

Avraham didn't need any help but he was able to save 10 Jewish lives.

We were married in the camp. My cousin Tzivia wanted me to come to America. Avraham and I decided to go to Israel.









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