

“We Won’t Survive Anyway”



The Great Synagogue in Ludmir (Vladimir-Volynsky), Poland, pre-WWII, courtesy of Wikimedia.

1939--Nazis invade Ludmir and many are killed, including the wife and child of Carl Goldberg. Chaim Mibab begins to devise a “safety plan” for his family.



Computerized sketch of Polish Jews being rounded up to a ghetto, courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Computerized sketch of German soldiers shooting Polish Jews, courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.



December 5, 1923--Roza (Rose) is born to Chaya and Chaim Mibab, in Ludmir, Poland. She is the 4th of 7 children.

1930’s--Rose is a happy and playful child, often babysitting her younger siblings and small children in the village. One such child is Nachama, daughter of Carl Goldberg and his wife.



Carl and daughter Nachama.



Computerized sketch of Hitler watching German soldiers marching into Poland, September 1939, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, image provided by the German Federal Archives.

1941--Ludmir Jews are rounded up and sequestered in a ghetto. Chaim owns a millinery shop in the ghetto and begins making military hats. Rose is forced to work in the potato fields, clean homes for the Germans and carry human waste out of the ghetto.

Early 1942--Carl, still grieving the loss of his young family, is spending more time with the Mibab family, and it becomes apparent that there is an attraction between Rose and Carl, despite a 12 year age difference. Rose’s father, Chaim, often comments that Rose should find a young man closer in age, to which she responds, “*What’s the difference? We won’t survive anyway.*”

September, 1942--Nazis begin systematic raids in the ghetto. Family members are killed, including Rose’s older brother, Moishe, leaving behind his wife, Yente, and small child, Esther.

1943--Judenrien (cleansing of the Jews) is increasing. The “safety plan” of Rose’s father consisted of tunnels, “living graves” and pits in the ground that could hide people under buildings, barns and structures within and outside of the ghetto. Often people were paid to keep these places hidden. During one of these raids, Chaim and son Herschel are killed.

December 1943--Annihilation of Ludmir Jews is ordered. Yente is among those killed. In the mayhem’s confusion, Rose, hidden by a straw mattress, survives. After the Germans leave her home, she begins to leave and notices her little niece, Esther, alive and hidden in a corner. Rose escapes with the baby.

Early 1944--Rose, with Esther, are joined by her younger brother, Reuven, and young cousins. This young group tries to find hiding places, but people are fearful to accept young children. They stay underground, underneath a latrine and in a potato cellar. They are joined by Rose’s mother and another young brother. Daily, Rose tries to find better places and ultimately finds a farmer, who her father had previously paid, who agrees to let this unlikely band of travelers hide in his barn. Carl remembers the “safety plan” and finds Rose with her mother and the children. The Nazis later burn the barn, and the group is forced into the woods.

Computerized sketch of what a potato cellar might have looked like.

