

MALWINA MOSES

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



Malwina Moses (born Malwina Tiefenbrunner), daughter of Herman and Rosalia Tiefenbrunner, was born on October 3, 1928, in Wadowice,

Poland. She had a younger sister, Lila. Herman was a horse trader whose business partner and best friend, Ludwig, was not Jewish. Malwina grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family, and due to the antisemitism she faced at the public school she attended, was only friends with other Jewish students. Malwina's parents taught her the importance of *tzedakah* (a Hebrew word meaning "charity"), giving to those less fortunate, and they opened their home to those who needed a place to celebrate Shabbat (the Sabbath) and other Jewish holidays.

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, and World War II began. Malwina's father feared that Jews would be targeted for persecution, and he wanted the family to hide in a village. The family packed a wagon full of their belongings and went to Ludwig's home, where they stayed overnight. The family then continued to move east towards where they knew Soviet forces had invaded Poland. Along the way, they saw remnants of the Polish army, dead animals, and dead bodies. The family—who were strictly kosher—survived on bread, milk, cheese and potatoes.

The family registered with Soviet authorities in Łuck, Poland. They received identification cards and were not allowed to leave the town without permission. They lived with a Jewish family, and Malwina's father looked for work. Early on in their escape, Malwina's sister lost one of her shoes. Malwina's mother went to the police station to ask for new shoes for her children, but she was only given one pair of shoes for her two daughters. Malwina remembers that she and her

sister would share one pair of shoes for a long time; they alternated who played outside and who played inside.

In the spring of 1940, the family was relocated to Siberia. They were told they would have better housing and employment, and that the children would be allowed to go to school. The trip—by cattle car—took close to three weeks. Once in Siberia, the family had to acclimate to freezing temperatures, hard work, and harsh conditions. In the fall of 1943, the family was moved to Leninabad, in Uzbekistan. Her parents worked and she and Lila attended school. They remained there until the end of the war in May 1945, when they left the Soviet Union.

The family returned to Poland, where Malwina heard about the pogrom in Kielce. Malwina married Salomon Moses, a Holocaust survivor, in 1949. They immigrated to Israel in 1950, and to the United States in 1956. The couple had two daughters and three grandchildren. The family lived in Omaha, Nebraska, where Malwina worked with her sister as a dental technician. This interview was conducted in Columbia, Maryland, on January 18, 1998.