



PERSONAL HISTORY

Sabina Szwarc

February 24, 1923

Warsaw, Poland

Sabina grew up in a Jewish family in Piotrkow Trybunalski, a small industrial city southeast of Warsaw. Her family lived in a non-Jewish neighborhood. Her father was a businessman and her mother was a teacher. Both Yiddish and Polish were spoken in their home. In 1929 Sabina began public school, and later went on to study at a Jewish secondary school.

1933–39: On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Four days later, German troops streamed into our city. After one month of occupation, my father had to give up his business, I had to give up school, and our family of five was forced into a ghetto that had been set up by the Germans. We shared an apartment with another family. From blocks away we could hear the sounds of German patrols and heavy German boots on the cobblestones.

1940–44: In 1942, as the ghetto was being liquidated, my Polish girlfriends Danuta and Maria got my sister and me false Polish ID cards. On the eve of the final roundup, we escaped and hid in their home. Two weeks later my sister and I took labor assignments in Germany where nobody knew us. I was a maid in a hotel for German officers. One of them asked me whether there were Jews in my family. He said that he was an anthropologist and that my ears and profile seemed Jewish. I looked offended and continued to work.

Sabina was liberated in Regensburg, Germany, by American troops on April 27, 1945. She immigrated to the United States in 1950 and pursued a career as an ophthalmologist.