CELINA L.

Celina was born in 1931 in Zbarazh, Ukraine, which at that time was part of Poland. Prior to working together in a family business, her father was a professional soldier and her mother was a mathematician. Celina had a brother who was six years older than her. Her family had been planning to move to Palestine; however, after the outbreak of war in 1939, they decided to live with an aunt and uncle in Lviv (then part of the Soviet Union, but occupied by Nazi Germany's armed forces in 1941).

After moving into the Lviv ghetto, Celina's father was taken to the Janowska forced labour camp. He was sent back to the ghetto nine months later, after contracting typhus. When he recovered, he was re-deported and died in the Janowska labour camp. Celina's brother was captured and also died in a forced labour camp. In 1942, her mother arranged for Celina to be smuggled out and returned to another aunt's house in her hometown. Celina never saw her mother again.

When Celina was 11, she went to live with a Polish Catholic farmwoman who treated her as her own child. After the war, Celina learned that, unbeknownst to her, another family had also been hiding on the farm at the same time. She was 14 years old when the war ended, at which time she moved to another part of Poland with her adoptive Polish Catholic family.

Celina had no plans of leaving her adoptive family until a childhood friend showed up at her family's house. Her friend convinced Celina to join a group of children going to Israel. While they were waiting in a displaced persons camp near Prague, Celina learned that she could come to Canada. She was sent to Regina and lived with two different foster families. There were difficulties with the first foster family, but the second family provided a lovely home for her. After graduating, Celina worked as a stenographer in Vancouver. She then moved to Edmonton where she married and had two children.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORD OF CELINA L., 1983 IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.