

Giza Wiernik Collection
Jerusalem, Israel

Giza Wiernik was born Giza Golda Rozenblum – Shtoltzberg in Jamna, near Nadworna in Poland on August 2, 1917. She was an only daughter of Mordechai Rozenblum – Shtoltzberg and Chaja Tema Bitman Rozenblum – Shtoltzberg. Giza's parents owned a small grocery store and in the summer operated a summer lodge "Szarotka."

Giza attended elementary school in Jamna, middle school in Delatyn and high school in Stanislawow. She graduated from high school in 1935. There were only seven or eight Jewish families in Jamna and Giza's family spent every Shabbat in Jaremcza with their family.

In September 1939 the Soviets entered the area as a result of the Ribbentrop Molotov pact, but life did not change much for Giza or her parents. They still managed their small hotel, but now for Soviet officials, while Giza worked in Stanislawow in the local public health office.

In June 1941 the Hungarian Army entered Jamna and Giza's father was arrested for hiding Hungarian Jews. Soon the Germans took over and one of them cut off the beard of Giza's father. Later her mother was taken to Delatyn with the rest of the Jewish women. Giza worked as a cook for the German officers in Jamna. Giza's father and the other Jewish men were forced to build a bridge.

A Ukrainian priest Fr. Łucziw, who was a friend of Giza's father, gave Giza a birth certificate in the name of Maria Jaworska. Even with this new certificate it was a difficult decision to leave her hometown. Giza and her father survived one "*Aktion*" but in the next one only Giza was able to hide in the forest.

Giza finally left Jamna and traveled to Lvov, where she saw an advertisement in the paper that there was a clerical position available in a photo studio "Appel" on 12 Akademicka Street. Giza applied for the job, was hired and soon understood that she was in a strange situation. The Appel family was a Jewish family who had owned the photo studio before the war. During the German occupation an Ukrainian policeman, Prudyus, took over the business, but kept the Jewish family. In reality the six Jews did all the professional work while Giza was hired as a receptionist. Mr. Prudyus told her openly that it was her duty to protect the six hiding Jews. Most of the clients in the photo shop were Germans who often paid with their ration cards. Giza bought food with the ration cards for the hiding Jews. She never revealed to the Appel family or to her employer that she was Jewish too.

In the spring 1942 Giza met an acquaintance from back home, who immediately denounced her to the Gestapo as Jewish. Giza didn't return to the photo studio or to her rented room. She went directly to the "*Arbeitsamt*" (labor department) and registered to go to Germany for work.

During the two days of medical exams and waiting for the transport Giza could hear Jews in the neighboring hall who had been arrested. She began to have doubts about her

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decision feeling that her fate belonged with other Jews. Giza forced herself to push these thoughts away.

Giza's transport arrived in Dresden and she was housed in a camp for Ukrainian women "Wildenman lager." Giza worked in production control of time fuses for grenades (Kontrol Abteilung für Zeitzünder) in the Zeiss Ikon factory in Dresden.

Jewish women worked in the adjacent work section to the Ukrainian section and Giza was asked by a German woman to pass food to the Jewish prisoners.

During her work in the factory Giza met her future husband. Reuwen Goldberg posed as a Byelorussian under a false name of Roman Wiernik. It took a long time for Reuwen and Giza to trust each other and admit that they were both Jewish.

On August 24, 1944 they were married in Hermsdorf near Dresden. Their son Alexander was born on April 15, 1945.

During the liberation period the Wierniks suffered terrible bouts of hunger. They started to walk eastward and reached Legnica (Liegnitz), where they met Jews returning from the Soviet Union. Giza and Reuwen decided to turn west and in March 1947 they reached UNRRA camp in Ziegenheim.

In April they moved to Schwebde DP camp and on July 11, 1947 they boarded the ship "President Garfield", which was to take them to Palestine. The ship was renamed "Exodus" and on July 20, 1947 the Jewish refugees were put on three British deportation vessels, which were to take them back to France. For an entire month the three ships anchored at a French port suffering terrible conditions. On September 8, 1947 the British finally took the Jewish refugees back to Germany.

Giza, Reuwen and their son Alexander were placed in Amstau DP camp in Germany. In February 1948 they were allowed to finally land in Palestine.

Their daughter Ronit was born in 1949.

Alexander – Uri Wiernik is a psychologist and the father of three children. His sister Ronit is the mother of two children. Giza Wiernik as of May 2004 resides in Jerusalem.

Three postcards; views of Jamna and Delatyn

Four photographs; group portraits of school friends and family of Giza Rozenblum – Scholtzberg in Jamna and vicinity; dated: c.1930-1932

Photograph; Giza Wiernik holding her baby son Alexander; Legnica, Poland; May 1946

Two Photographs; Giza and Reuwen Wiernik and their son Alexander with other Jewish DP's in the UNRRA Ziegenheim DP camp in Germany; March 1947

Photograph; Giza and Reuwen Wiernik and their son Alexander (seated on left) in the Schwebde DP camp in Germany; April – May, 1947

Two Photographs; Giza and Reuwen Wiernik and their son Alexander with other Jewish refugees on board of "Exodus"; dated: July 1947

Three Photographs; Alexander – Uri Wiernik with his parents and alone standing next to barbed wire fence in the Amstau camp, where they were placed after "Exodus" was brought back to Germany; dated: September 1947

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Two Photographs; Alexander – Uri Wiernik with his mother Giza and alone, holding a toy, in Hadera, Israel; dated: June 1948

Document; marriage certificate; copy issued in 1958 stating that Roman Wiernik born July 5, 1917 and Maria Jaworska born January 1, 1917 got married on August 24, 1944 in Hermsdorf, Germany

Birth Certificate; copy issued in 1958 stating that Alexander Wiernik, son of Roman Wiernik and Maria Wiernik nee Jaworska was born on April 15, 1945 in Hermsdorf, Germany