

# Matylda Wyszynska' S First Husband, Staszek Podhaniuk.



This is photo of my first husband, Staszek Podhaniuk. It was taken just after the WWII was over.

In March 1944, when the Soviets were already very close, at 2 AM the sawmill was evacuated.

It was a harsh winter, we roamed for eight days and eight nights and finally they took us across the San to Jaroslaw, a town ca. 100 km west of Lwow.

On the San I saw Polish navy-blue police for the first time in years, the Ukrainians had different uniforms.

When I saw the navy-blue policeman, I felt like giving him a kiss.

Those were the same kind of thugs as the Ukrainians though perhaps they didn't participate on this scale in the murders.

When we reached Jaroslaw, they sent us to various sawmills owned by the Delta company, the branch office was in Cracow, the main office in Breslau.

I was sent to Grybow, a small town near Nowy Sacz, a town, 160 km south-west of Jaroslaw.

When I was there, Staszek suddenly turned up, who didn't know what was going on with me but who learned the sawmill had been evacuated. They also fled the Soviets.

He went to Chabowka, a village 90 km west of Grybow together with his mother, because his father went to Czestochowa, a city 170 km north-west of Grybow, where he was put in charge of a school near the city. Staszek, in turn, got a job on the railways. Chabowka was an important interchange between Zakopane, Cracow and Nowy Sacz, it was called the eastern railway.

He started looking for me. Later, when he came for me, I fled from Grybow. It must have been the summer or autumn of 1944.

Staszek and his mother had rented a room with some farmers in Chabowka. When I fled from Grybow, I went there.

At first his mother didn't want me to be there, so we rented a room for me across the bridge. I was jobless.

The Germans were still there. I had a Kennkarte. Staszek started telling me he knew that manager, a German, who was a fantastic man, collaborating with the underground.

There were Polish partisans there, very active in the area.

Their job was to blow up bridges, crossings, rail tracks, viaducts, so that the transports of weapons, munitions, the deployments, didn't go east, because it was a major interchange.

As if knowing what would happen when, the manager always disappeared when something was to be blown up.

That manager supervised the technical staff and he was often out on the platform, and one day I accosted him and I asked him whether he could give me any job.

He knew [Staszek] well so he told me to come. Because there were no vacancies, he fired a Volksdeutsch girl who brought him all kinds of cold cuts because her father was a butcher!

I worked there until the end. The liberation came around May [Editor's note: Nowy Sacz was liberated on 19th January 1945, and Chabowka probably around the same date].

All war I kept promising myself I'd shoot some German, which I never did because the Soviets came again. Savages, simply.

They raped, plundered and drank. My neighbor in Chabowka was raped, we sat in the cellar, terrible things were happening.

Then, when the Germans had gone, Tamara, my schoolmate turned up, and persuaded us to go to Walbrzych, a city 500 km north-west of Nowy Sacz.

We set up in Walbrzych, Tamara lived there too. She worked at the registry office and she married me and Staszek on 6th January, 1946.

I got a job at the Polish State Railways' road department while Staszek quit his job and went to Wrocław to finish the studies he had begun in Lwów.

I couldn't complete my studies because I didn't have the documents. Then I was transferred to Wrocław because I wanted to be with my husband.

Staszek became a civil engineer and in 1950 he was sent to Częstochowa because that's where he wanted to be, with his parents.

In Czestochowa my husband worked and I sat at home. He was assigned an apartment on the premises of a wool plant he was appointed the technical director of.

My relations with his parents were strained because they didn't approve of our marriage.

I didn't even notify the Yad Vashem about Staszek as a righteous among the nations because his mother didn't want me to.

They forbade me to reveal I was Jewish.

They didn't want us to have children. Staszek loved his mother very much.