

Zuzanna Mensz' With Her Relatives And Friends In Falenica



This is our family in garden in Falenica, where my mother moved in 1938. I think my sister Zlatka took this photo. From left are sitting: I, my sister Hilka, my mom, Zlatka's friend, Japanese, Aniela, also Zlatka's friend from Warsaw. Behind are standing our cousin from Skryhiczyn Josel Rottenberg and our neighbour from Falenica.

After Hilka had passed her final gymnasium exams Mom sold her land in Skryhiczyn and bought a house in Falenica, just outside Warsaw. It might have been 1938. Mom wanted to live closer to us. We had a deal my sister would start her studies when I completed the school. During the remaining year she gave private lessons, lived with Mom. I used to visit them on my days off. There were two houses next to each other in Falenica. One was relatively small, consisting of four rooms and a kitchen. The former janitor lived in one of the rooms. The owner who sold the house to Mom asked her to let her stay. And Mom said yes. The second house had not been finished off yet. In 1939 Mom found a tenant for the house for the summer. She lived there the entire war. Some more people moved in, finished the house off, boarded it up, so it started to be inhabited. The house still stands there, I'd like to get it back but I didn't know how to deal with that. You'd need a lot of money.

During the siege of Warsaw my sister Hilka was in Falenica with Mother. They heard about the bombing and were sure I'd been killed. Hilka came to look for me. We went to Falenica together on foot. Various friends began to show up in Falenica, staying at my Mom's on their way east [to the Soviet-occupied, eastern parts of Poland]. My sister and I decided to go east as well. Unfortunately,

we left Mother in Falenica. We thought we'd have her come as soon as we settled. We had a weak imagination. It later turned out the janitor living with us was German. When the Germans marched in she told my Mother to get out because from then on the whole house belonged to her. We didn't know about it all. Mom went to Skryhiczyn and stayed there. I later found out she went to Lublin on her way from Warsaw and she spoke to a friend she had much respect for and he advised her against going to Russia. He knew it from his own experience: his son had gone to Lwow and later come back because otherwise he would be arrested. We later tried to bring Mom to us. You could get a special permission from Stalin to cross the border. I got it for Mom and sent it to her in a letter to Falenica. It probably got there too late for her to receive it. And Mom did not come. We exchanged letters later on, I sent her parcels.