

JANINE OBERROTMAN



Born: October 1, 1925 (Lvov, Poland)

Interview Date: January 2016

Janine Oberrotman (born Janina Binder) was born in 1925 in Lvov, Poland. She was an only child and grew up in a non-religious Jewish family. In 1941, the German Army invaded Lvov and forced the Jewish population into a ghetto. Janine's father was caught stealing potatoes and deported to Janowska concentration camp where he was murdered. Janine was able to escape the ghetto and flee to her Aunt Wanda's home in a nearby town. She obtained false papers from a gentile friend and traveled to Ponikwa and hid as a Christian with her maternal uncle and grandmother. Janine's mother remained in the Lvov ghetto and died during the ghetto liquidation. In 1944, Janine was denounced and arrested, but the Gestapo lacked evidence to prove she was Jewish. This likely saved her life; she was not deported to a death camp and was instead sent to Stuttgart and incarcerated as a Polish forced laborer. She pretended to be Catholic for the rest of the war and was liberated by the French Army in spring 1945. Janine met Holocaust survivor Joseph Oberrotman and they married in 1950. In 1953, they immigrated with their first son to the United States and settled in Chicago, Illinois. There they had two more sons and Janine raised her family and tutored French. This interview took place in January 2016 in Los Angeles, CA.