

## Matrena Popel (1870-1962)



Occupation: Housewife, small farmer

Matrena (Matriona) Popel was married twice, as was her second husband. In the same house live son Vasili and his wife Stefania

1941: At the beginning of the German occupation she is already over 70 years old and widowed.

1942: The Popels hide their Jewish neighbour Etká Lippman and son Józef for two months in winter. During the day, when son and daughter-in-law are working, she looks after Etká and Józef.

1943: After the liquidation of the ghetto, the Lippmans hide again for several months, from June to December, at the Popels. In summer, the attic of the stable serves as a hiding place, in winter a cellar pit under the stable.

A relative by marriage (grandson of her husband from his first marriage) joined the SS-Division Galicia. He warns her in time for a raid: "If you have hidden someone, pay attention. The Germans will come soon!" The hiding place was then changed to a haystack in the field.

1944: In the last weeks of the occupation Abraham, Etká and Józef Lippman hide in the forest. At night Etká sneaks up to the Popels' house and is supplied with food and information by them.

In 2003 Yad Vashem honours Matrena Popel as Righteous among the Nations.

Józef Lipmann remembers the days in hiding:

*»Father secretly took me to my mother who hid with our Ukrainian friends. The hiding place was behind a haystack, in the attic of the cowshed. There was another hiding place in the entrance area of this stable where the chaff-cutter was stored. There was a small cellar for turnips into which led a trapdoor which had to be lifted. Someone had to let us into the cellar by closing the trapdoor behind us. The cellar was so low and small that you had to crawl into it on your belly or on your back. You had to remain in this position the whole time, from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m., for at this time the farmer's wife came in to milk the cows. She let us get out from the cellar and gave us something to eat. We could wash our hands and faces and off we went back into the small cellar ...« (Lipman, Memories)*

Sources: Yad Vashem Righteous database, M.31.2/9968/1; Lipman, Memories