

The Driven. Written by Edward Robbins.

© Robbins family

About a life of Edward Robbins as a child - Imic Raboi in the 30s and 40s in Briceni, Bessarabia and the family's experience during the Holocaust.

There's a line in my father's book, "I lay down in the ditch and went to sleep. I slept for forty years." So describes my father's inability to talk about his life until only 15 years before his sudden death. And when he spoke, it came rushing out through this book, through his poems, and through his lectures; lectures so angry and vehement that surely he was trying to expel the demons that haunted him.

Maybe he was trying to make up for the childhood he lost in his first 13 years in Europe. Others have said something inside him made him hurry to do things, anything, that would take him to the next place or level in his life. Maybe he knew his time on earth was short. We'll never know.

--Shelley Robbins, 2012

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[Part \(file\) 1](#) – life in Briceni in the Romanian period until 1940, under Russians – from June of 1940-June of 1941, and back under Romanians and Germans from summer of 1941.

Introduction The Good life The Russians came The high bed The telephone call Goose Feathers The burying The rains came	Chaim Leib leaves The sound truck The drive The canteen Point of distribution The turnover Our destination Broken glass	Mourner's Kaddish Delirium The wagon maker The night of terror Manya The look of hate The gift
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[Part \(file\) 2](#) – life on an occupied territory, partisans, the Russian army freed the territory.

The partisans The order The reunion	The secret The message The ordeal	Goodbye Part II – Coming home
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[Part \(file\) 3](#) –searching for my father

The letter The search Schmerinka Vacksal (<i>Train station</i>)	The Ukrainian peasants God bless Michael The surprise	My mother tells the story Going home once again Life in Briceni
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[Part \(file\) 4](#) – going to Bucharest, again moving to Hungary, Austria.

Talk of Bucharest Captain's revenge Pesach is almost here Once again on the move Bucharest Life in Bucharest	Summer camp King Michael abdicates Petru Groza Baby Mariam Plans for Golda's wedding Mr. Nijinsky	The mistake Another border to cross The Joint Distribution in Budapest On to Vienna
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[Part \(file\) 5](#) – plan to go Palestine, on a ship to America.

The DP Camp The black market Our turn to go to Palestine	Another disappointment The fight for Israel	So America It is The end
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Epilogue for The Driven
by Shelley Robbins
2012

My family has been very fortunate. That may not be the kind of statement you'd expect to hear after reading about the Holocaust, but it's true. Not only did my father survive, but so did his parents, many aunts and uncles and cousins. Imic Raboi, with his parents, Velvel and Chava Raboi, took the USS General Langfitt from Europe in 1950 and entered the United States via the port of New Orleans. They took another boat up the Mississippi River and were met in Memphis by Velvel's aunt and sponsor, Lizzie Shainberg. There they became William and Evelyn Robbins and their son, Edward Robbins.

Life was difficult at first. But William (Pop, to my two sisters and me) worked hard, first in a meat packing house, then soon saved enough money to open a Kosher butcher shop, the trade of most of the men in his family in Romania. They lived a comfortable life. Eddie went to school, learned English and helped his parents along the way. Grandma Chava worked alongside her husband, went to night school to learn English and taught it to her husband when she came home. They became an integral part of the Jewish community in Memphis and became friends with many of the other Holocaust survivors who settled in Memphis. This was a close-knit group that became a community within a larger one. They were observant Jews, all kept Kosher, and all spoke Yiddish to each other. Some of them are still alive today.

Ed received a bachelor's degree, a Master's in Social Work and a PhD in Public Administration. He never forgot the organizations that helped his family and devoted most of his career to Jewish communal work: Jewish Community Centers, Jewish resident camps, and the United Way. When he was ready, but only about 15 years before his death, he began to speak to audiences throughout California about the Holocaust.

While the Holocaust was a horrible time in their lives, Evelyn and William somehow survived the death of their only child at the age of 48. Ed, by then, had three adult daughters, but passed away before the birth of his seven grandchildren, many of whom are named for him.

Willie and Golde Zisser moved to Israel and lived a happy long life in Tel Aviv. They had two children, Sarah and Schmuel, and lived to see six grandchildren. Presently, there are also four great grandchildren.

Uncle Chaim Leib too moved to Israel after the war and raised a family of his own. Aunt Ruchel is the last of the family survivors of her generation. Until her sister Golde's death, they spent many years together and were best friends. Her husband Abrasha died in the 1980s. Their daughter Miriam, and son, Tzvika, live in Israel.