FOREWORD

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The Wartime Diary of Edmund Kessler was of great interest to me, not only because I was hidden in the same place with Edmund and Fryderyka Kessler, but for many more reasons. The book gave me certain information that I had not previously known. It was written as a diary/memoir and was organized by his daughter, Renata Kessler who was born after the war. She commissioned the translation of the text into English. It also contains a chapter from Kazik (Kazimierz Kalwinski), the son of the people who hid us. Kazik was only fifteen years old when his parents made a hiding place for the Jews and he was aware of the risk to his whole family. For example, when the German troops retreated from Russia and looked in the suburbs of Lwow for a place to stay overnight with their horses, one of the places they investigated was the property where we were hiding. Our “savior” Mrs. Kalwinska with her youngest son Stasiak showed them around. As they passed the clock, the little boy Stasiak, who was about 9 years old pointed it out to his mother, saying loudly, “Look someone is using the electricity!” We in the hiding place had a small bulb which was always on. The mother became frightened, but the German soldiers did not pay attention to this statement. After this incident, the beloved parents decided to send their child away to some relatives in western Poland, bearing in mind that if they were caught at least one member of the family would survive. These relatives did not treat him like a beloved

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child and it took some time after the liberation of Lwow until he could return. According to the book, the parents explained to him that he was sent away because they wanted to save him. A neighbor was discovered hiding Jews and he was hanged in a city park with a sign on his chest "Hiding Jews."

Edmund Kessler and his wife were part of the Lwow establishment. He had a doctorate of law and she came from a wealthy family. When the Germans took over, the city established a Judenrat, a Jewish committee comprised of well-known leaders. The Kesslers knew more about these Judenrat representatives than my parents or the society from which I came. We were Hasidic Jews who lived in our own community and did not mingle with secular Jews or Christians.

I came to the hiding place much later than the Kesslers did. We slept on the same platform. The entire hideout where we Jews stayed was 9 feet by 15 feet in area. The Kesslers and I slept over the area that was used for a bathroom. To get down one had to hunch as the ceiling was right above us.

Being an eighteen year old boy, I was in awe of this older educated man and his wife. In the hiding place, we all spoke very little except when it was necessary.

Even though much of this part of Poland was Hasidic, this book will be of interest to readers and students of the Holocaust, because it was written by an assimilated Jew. Included is the memoir of the son of a saintly family who saved 24 Jews. They were among the *Righteous Of The Nations*.