

Saved by Schindler: The Life of Celina Karp Biniáz, by William B. Friedrichs. North Liberty, Iowa: Ice Cube Press, 2022. xi, 258 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$21.95 paperback.

Reviewer Sonja Wentling is Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of History at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. Her interests include American, European, and Middle Eastern History as well as global antisemitism and the tension between history and memory of the Shoah.

When, in September 2020, the Claims Conference released its first-ever 50-state survey on Holocaust knowledge among Millennials and Gen Z, the results were alarming and showed a clear lack of awareness about the Holocaust and its basic facts: 63 percent of all national survey respondents did not know that 6 million Jews had been murdered and 48 percent could not even name a single concentration camp, even though more than 40,000 camps and ghettos had littered the European landscape of torture and death during World War II. While Iowa and other midwestern states like Minnesota and Wisconsin, scored highest in Holocaust awareness, the overall results nationwide were shocking. Gideon Taylor, President of the Claims Conference, implored the public that this survey “needs to serve as a wake-up call to us all, and as a road map of where government officials need to act” (“First-ever 50-state survey on Holocaust knowledge of American Millennials and Gen Z reveals shocking results”). Taylor is certainly right that education about the Holocaust has never seemed more relevant in a time of growing antisemitism, conspiracy theories, and hate crimes against Jewish communities and their institutions. Yet William B. Friedrichs’s *Saved by Schindler: The Life of Celina Karp Biniáz* reminds us that the most powerful instrument to impact and transform the human heart comes from individual survivors’ testimonies.

Friedrichs, a professor emeritus of history at Simpson College, takes the reader on Biniáz’s life journey from interwar Kraków in Poland, through the depths of horror in the Kraków ghetto and the concentration camps of Plaszów and Auschwitz, the twists and turns of being handed a lifeline and added to Schindler’s list of Jews, to her first tepid steps of freedom and redemption in the safe environment of a convent in Mildenheim, Germany, under the tender care of nun Mater Leontine, and ultimately to her arrival in the United States and an uncertain future that began in Iowa.

Biniáz was only eight years old when the Nazi war machine descended upon Poland and took away her safety, her freedom, and her childhood. Born into a middle-class family of non-observant assimilated Jewish parents, Ignacy and Felicja Karp, she enjoyed school, her

friends, and most of all her books. But the German invasion and occupation upended her life and disrupted her education for years to come. She never started third grade and found herself in a crucible of events that nearly cost Biniaz her life more than once. Both her father's and mother's accounting skills, quick thinking, and tender care helped protect their young daughter, who according to statistical probability would have most likely perished in the inferno of the Holocaust. The Karps worked as bookkeepers for the Jewish-owned Hogo manufacturing company, but with the expropriation of Jewish properties under Nazi rule, a German trustee assumed operation of the company. When Julius Madritsch, a Viennese businessman who, not unlike Schindler, cared about his Jewish workers, was appointed the trustee administrator of the Hogo firm, the Karps' fate took a serendipitous turn, which would eventually lead them to being added to Schindler's list of Jews.

Friedricks does an excellent job conveying the Karps' near unbelievable story of survival. Drawing from Thomas Keneally's historical novel, *Schindler's Arc*, and David Crowe's biography of Oskar Schindler, Friedricks relates the well-known facts of Oskar Schindler's life and heroism during the war, but through his conversations with Biniaz, he also resurrects some of the lesser-known acts of compassion by Schindler's wife Emilie. When young Biniaz fell ill at the Brünnlitz factory, it was Emilie who nursed her back to health with "her cooking and compassion" (77).

Yet the book does not end with Schindler's arc of protection nor the Karps' liberation. In fact, what makes this story so valuable is its focus on Biniaz's life after the Holocaust. The Nazis stole six years of Biniaz's life, but the wounds of the trauma they had inflicted stayed with her. She credits Mater Leontine, a German nun, for helping her with anger issues, but her life also illustrates the ongoing hidden pain of low self-esteem and wanting to fit in. Biniaz did not share her story for most of her adult life, but instead it remained hidden from the world, at first even from her own children. It was not until Steven Spielberg's movie rendition of Schindler's heroism that Biniaz found her voice. She wasn't ready to do so while a youngster at Des Moines's North High School nor as a student at Grinnell College. Yet her donations to the Iowa Jewish Historical Society (IJHS) in recent years—a cup from Schindler's enamelware factory and an iron pair of scissors he had given to her as a parting gift—have led her to return to the state that gave her a start for a new life and to bear witness.

Based on numerous interviews, private papers, and extensive correspondence with Biniaz, her family, and many others, Friedricks is able to capture her angst and struggle until she finally emerges from her shell to pour her passion into teaching and ultimately educating youth

about the Holocaust. Biniáz's journey of survival was no less than a miracle, but her ongoing determination to share her story is her gift to younger generations. With the number of Holocaust survivors dwindling, the urgency of "never again" has become less pronounced and more distant. Even Steven Spielberg's epic *Schindler's List*, once the "most real" rendition of the horrors of the Nazi murder of European Jews, is almost 30 years old and no longer captures the public's moral outrage as it once did. Ultimately, it is but a poor substitute for the voice of survivors like Biniáz's and those of thousands of other survivors whose stories have been carefully archived by Spielberg's Shoah Foundation.

Organizing Women: Home, Work, and the Institutional Infrastructure of Print in Twentieth Century America, by Christine Pawley. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2022. x, 267 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$30.95 paperback.

Reviewer Hang Nguyen, Ph.D., MLIS, is reference librarian at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City. She assists patrons with Iowa history and genealogical research. She earned her doctorate in Musicology and master's in Library and Information Science at the University of Iowa.

In *Organizing Women*, Christine Pawley, professor emerita at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, interweaves the lesser-known histories and impact of Iowa and midwestern women during the Progressive Era. Married or single, high- or middle-class, white or Black, these women pushed for change in their social circles while simultaneously being held back due to their gender in male-dominated institutions. Through six vignettes, Pawley takes the reader on a geographic journey, beginning in Iowa, continuing to Wisconsin, and ending in Illinois, illustrating the often-invisible work by women in each chapter.

The first three chapters feature Iowa women who began their work closer to home and whose efforts touched their immediate community first before eventually extending outside of the home. Through her personal diaries, Clara Steen Skott provides a narrative of farm life in West Liberty, Iowa. Skott began sharing her voice through local newspaper submissions, but after pursuing an education at Iowa State College, she worked for the school's Extension Services as a full-time employee and regularly published and traveled throughout the state. In Shenandoah, Iowa, Leanna Field Driftmeier's radio show, *Kitchen-Klatter* (1920s–1985) and monthly *Kitchen-Klatter Magazine* publications demonstrated "what it means to be an American homemaker" (46). Driftmeier's organized work remained within the confines of her own kitchen where she