



WERONIKA GOGA

(Mordarka, Poland, March 7, 1905, – Limanowa, Poland, February 9, 1977)



Weronika Goga with daughter Kunegunda and grandchildren
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Weronika Goga (maiden name Horwath) is a traditional Romani woman hailing from the Carpathian. During World War II, **she cared for 13 Roma orphans whose parents were murdered by the Nazis.** Her sense of care and effort to raise them was nothing short of heroic.

In 1927, Goga married Rom, Antoni Goga. Together they had four children: Kunegunda, Antoni, Anna, and Bronisław. She was a cheerful, kind and religious person with deep faith. She belonged to

the religious denomination, the Scapular of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Goga ran a small farm there. Her husband worked as a blacksmith, stove fitter, shoemaker, and musician. **The couple were also members of the family band, consisting of nine musicians.** She played the double bass, her husband violin. A Roma orchestra, they played at various festivities and had a good reputation in the local community.

Before the war, Goga and her family (husband, children, parents, and brothers) lived in their house in Mordarka, on a picturesque hill named Kopciówka. Her brother bought the property from some Jewish brothers who ran the inn there. Later, the property was gifted to Goga by her brother.

The house in Mordarka seemed to be a safe place, and during the war, **Kopciówka became a shelter for Weronika's relatives.** However, in January 1943, Nazis burst into Goga's house. They arrested the Roma adults and left the children behind. Those arrested were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were murdered.

Goga miraculously survived. **The Nazis did not notice her among the group of children.** The only remaining adult, she was left with her four children, in addition to her relative's thirteen children. Despite the war, and the constant danger she experienced as a lone Romani woman, she took it upon herself to feed, care for, and raise 17 children, who had become fatherless. **With dedication and courage, Goga ensured all their survival.**

Goga's granddaughter had the following to say:

"My grandmother Weronika miraculously survived. The Germans did not notice her in the crowd among the children. Is this a coincidence? I don't think so! God's providence watched over the fate of 13 children who became orphans. My grandmother was alone

with four of her children and thirteen orphans. My mother, as one of the oldest of the children, was helping my grandmother to support the entire family, though she was only nine years old herself. The cruel times they had to live in were associated with the daily struggle for life - survival, food, clothing, firewood, and medicine. Despite these difficult realities of World War II, my grandmother and her children were able to survive. Grandmother gave love, care, and upbringing to all the children who were sent to her by fate. Throughout her life, the rescued children showed her gratitude and respect, and would visit her, returning to the place where their ordeal began. Grandmother gave them unlimited protection and love. She couldn't do otherwise. In one tragic moment, she became the mother of 13 children who entrusted her with fate.”

Source:

1. The written statement was provided by Monika Sternal, Weronika Goga's granddaughter.

This biography has been written by Justyna Matkowska