

## FELICIJA RADLINSKIENĖ

1906-1988

Age when rescuing: 35

Profession: Farmer

People rescued: 2

- A Muslim woman who rescued Jews.
- An orphan who married another orphan.
- The family raised more than just their own children.

Felicija's father died when she was still a little girl, leaving her mother to raise five small children on her own. Felicija's husband, Jonas Radlinskas, lost both his parents as a child. Both Jonas and his younger brother were raised by the eldest son in the family, who was just 16 years old at the time. Felicija and Jonas Radlinskas had a daughter named Marytė, who thinks that it was the fact that they both grew up in very difficult conditions and came to know life this way that led to their amplified sense of empathy.

Once they were married and living in the village of Raižiai, Jonas and Felicija had three daughters: Elena, who was born in 1931, Rozalija, who was born in 1936, and Marytė, who was born in 1940. The family lived in a rented house in Raižiai and had a farm that allowed them to earn a living. Felicija's widowed mother lived with them as well. In addition to their own three children, the Radlinskases raised three other children – they took in Jonas's baby nephew when his brother's wife died, and Felicija's brother's baby twin boys when their mother died. They raised all three boys until they could go to the army.

During the war, the family took in a Russian soldier who had typhus and had fallen behind his company. Felicija treated him with wormwood until the young man got back on his feet. The Radlinskases invited him to stay, but he turned down their offer, fearing that he would be considered a deserter. Jonas respected his decision and took him by horse to Alytus.

They always taught their daughters that you must do good to others, and then God will help you. The Radlinskases' good hearts and incredible courage also saved two young Jewish girls during the Holocaust. In the autumn of 1942, Dora and Shifra Reznik, the daughters of a Butrimonys butcher shop owner and merchant, knocked on the Radlinskases' door. They were the only ones in the family left alive. Both were minors – one was about 15 years old and the other was about 16. Jonas and Felicija Radlinskas decided to take the girls in. They hid them in various places of the homestead – in the basement, in the attic, in the barn. In the summer they sometimes hid them in the fields or in the hay stacks. A hiding hole was dug out in the room under the bed, where Dora and Shifra would hide in the face of unexpected danger. **The Radlinskases' youngest daughter, Marytė, was taught to notify the sisters about any potential danger – she was only three years old at the time.** When the family went out to work in the fields, the child was instructed to keep her eye on the yard. If she ever saw a stranger, she was to go as fast as she could to the Reznik

sisters and point to the hiding place. Marytė did this numerous times. Felicija taught the girls to sew so that they would have something to do while spending all day long in the hiding place. When the Radlinskas family gathered for dinner, they would draw the curtains and then Dora and Shifra would join them. Jonas and Felicija did not know how to read, so Dora or Shifra would read them the newspapers and tried to find information about news from the front. The sisters lived with the Radlinskases until the end of the war.

After the war, Jonas took the sisters to their house in Butrimonys, but it was practically destroyed – ransacked, with the windows broken. Jonas offered to buy the house from them, which gave the sisters the money they needed to get to their relatives in Kaunas. Meanwhile, Jonas and Felicija were afraid to stay in Raižiai, so they moved their family to their new house in Butrimonys, which they repaired over time. Sometime later, Felicija ran into an old neighbour from Raižiai at the market, who confirmed that she had done the right thing – after the war, men came to Raižiai repeatedly, looking for the Radlinskases, the “good people who rescued the Jews”.

**Both Radlinskases were Tatars who professed Islam. Felicija was a more zealous believer than Jonas, and visited the mosque more often. The Radlinskases clearly did not differentiate people according to faith and religion. This family of Muslim Tatars had taken in two Jewish girls, and Jonas’s close friend in Butrimonys was a Catholic priest.**

Jonas died in 1956, leaving Felicija, her mother and three daughters at home. And even during hard times, they shared their food with even poorer neighbours. Their grown-up daughters moved to Kaunas one by one. After Felicija’s mother died, her daughters brought her to Kaunas as well. Felicija left the house in Butrimonys to one of the twin brothers they had raised.

**This information was collected using:**

[www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)

[www.issigelbejesvaikas.lt](http://www.issigelbejesvaikas.lt)

Told by Jonas and Felicija’s daughter, Marytė