An Example of Jewish Identity and a Jewish Neshama-soul

A baby girl was born, out of wedlock, in Sveksna between the WARS. Her mother was from Sveksna and her father was a refugee who had come to Sveksna. The mother's family did not want her to keep the baby. She, the mother, would have been scorned by the Jewish community if she had done so. The Rabbi did a big mitzvah, in cooperation with the Priest. The baby was given to a local farmer[1] and his wife, who did not have any children. She was baptized, brought up as a Catholic and was very religious. An important factor in her upbringing and education was hatred for the Jews. Since she had all the proper papers she had no problems during WWII. Everyone in the area knew her story, and she looked Jewish. Her black hair and black eyes testified this. After the WAR, she became a Nun and a nurse and worked in the local hospital. After the Holocaust, she was given the house that had previously belonged to her Jewish grandfather and lived there. Then she had many crucifixes in her home.

Her biological family left Sveksna before the Holocaust. Her mother had gone to France, married, had two children and was killed in the Holocaust. Her mother's sister and two of her brothers had gone to Belgium and the oldest brother had come on Aliyah. After the WAR, she wanted to be in contact with them. She wanted to leave Lithuania. She met with her aunt in Latvia, since her aunt couldn't get a permit to enter Lithuania. She met with her Father. She wanted to come to Israel. She was not allowed to do so, for she was a Christian and no one would sign for her. It is not known if her uncle was still alive then. She was not able to leave Lithuania.

In the 1990s she evidently decided to return to her Jewish origin. She then became known as the only Jew in Sveksna. She was happy to show Jewish tourists around. Even if she did so for economic reasons, this does show a sign of love of our people! She died a few years ago. She was buried in the Catholic Cemetery there.

Notes:
A shop, which was once owned by a Jewish man, was used as a residence for an old Jewish lady in 1999. It seems that she was the one Jew that lived in the town, but she died recently. She was happy when Jews tourists/visitors came to Sveksna and told them about the Jews that were once there.

Source: email from David Newman, 2 September 2004

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[1] The farmer Stirbys, who lived near Sveksna in 1941, took little Jewish girl in 1941. Her name was Valerija Venckut. Source: email from Petras Čeliauskas, 30 December 1999