

Holocaust trauma may be transmitted to subsequent generations

BY MINA COHN
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Tammy Bottner, who was born in Ottawa, is a physician, writer, and mom. She is also the child and grandchild of Holocaust survivors.

Bottner will present her debut book, *Among the Reeds: The true story of how a family survived the Holocaust*, at a bagel breakfast at Temple Israel on Sunday, October 27, 9:30 am. Ambassador Johan Verkammen of Belgium will offer words of welcome.

In *Among the Reeds*, Bottner recounts the moving story of her family's travails in Europe before, during, and after the Second World War.

"The fact that I was born at all is something of a miracle", she says. "So many Jewish children perished in the Holocaust. But my father survived."

In fact, her father, and his sister Irene, were two of the "hidden children of the Holocaust," separated from their parents at a tender age for the duration of the war.

"The trauma of that separation changed everyone involved," she notes. "The parents, the children, even those who saved them. And that trauma may not have ended with the conclusion of the Second World War."

"I had the most disturbing thing happen when my own first child was born" she says. "I experienced what felt like flashbacks of being hunted by the Nazis. Living in an idyllic community 50 years after the Second World War, I was literally shaking with fear, imagining Nazi boots pounding up the stairs. It was incredibly upsetting."

Those war-time experiences didn't really happen to the author. They happened to her grandmother Melly, decades earlier and thousands of miles away. So what was going on?

Scientists have found that the trauma of surviving the Holocaust changed survivors' genes. And that those changes have been passed on to second and third generation survivors. In her book, Bottner reviews the fascinating science of epigenetics, discussing intriguing evidence about trans-generational trauma transmission.

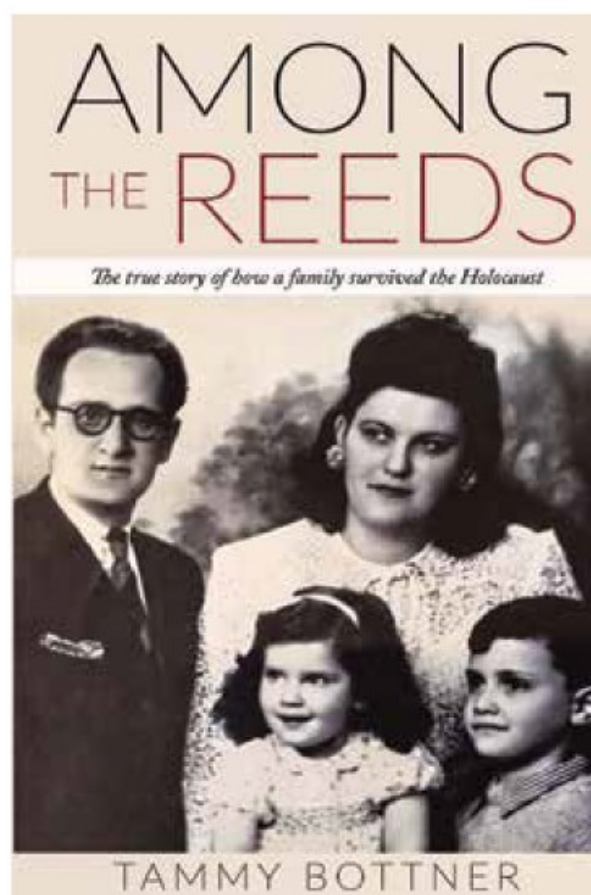
Following the war, the author's grandparents, Genek and Melly Bottner, settled in Ottawa and opened Elite Furs on Bank Street. Her father, Al Bottner, met his future wife, Ottawa native Rosalee Segal, daughter of the late Al and Betty Segal.

"For much of my life I avoided all

"The fact that I was born at all is something of a miracle"



Author Tammy Bottner will discuss *Among the Reeds: The true story of how a family survived the Holocaust* at Temple Israel, October 27.



things Holocaust related," says Bottner. "It was too upsetting."

But eventually, realizing that her family's survival story would be lost with time, the author decided to research what happened. She interviewed her surviving relatives and did meticulous research resulting in this book.

To attend Bottner's talk, RSVP to HEMsvp2019@gmail.com by October 22. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y3j5ofs7> for more information.