

## **RG-50.002.0103**

### **Summary**

Rose Schwartz, born in 1926 in Jodłowa, Poland, describes the start of the war; a threatening letter about her father, a wealthy Jewish store owner, sent by a Polish neighbor to the German authorities in November 1939; her parents' leaving home as a result of this letter; staying home with her younger brother and two grandfathers; the German police and their frequent searches of the house for her father and valuables; Jewish people beaten in the streets, including one of her grandfathers; the destruction of the town synagogue's Torah scrolls; the brutal beating of her grandfather after he refused to step on the synagogue's Torah scrolls, which had been thrown into the street; her grandfather's death and his Jewish burial; the implementation of a curfew, the wearing of armbands, and ghettoization; going to the homes of her parents' friends and asking them to hold on to various belongings for safekeeping; being beaten by an SS officer when she refused to tell him where her father was hiding; her father's work in the lumber business; hiding with her family for over two years underneath one of the lumber processing buildings with the help of one of her father's former employees; the conditions of the hiding place; being forced to leave home because a Nazi officer wanted to live there; moving to one of her grandfather's homes; hearing rumors about deportations and camps; her mother giving a man the family's couch in exchange for a warning when the time came for deportation; the man honoring this deal and warning the family the night before; leaving home with only a few possessions and hiding in the woods with some of the other Jewish families from town; learning later about the Polish police shooting all of the Jews who remained in town and the mass grave in the woods; the people being forced to undress before the shooting began; Polish policemen searching the woods with dogs to find the people who fled; having to provide bread, butter, and clothing to the family who was hiding them; occasionally going into town for food; nearly being caught by the police during a trip to town; fasting for Yom Kippur while in hiding; moving to hide in an attic in a neighboring town; being arrested and taken to jail with her family after the woman who owned the house, an acquaintance of her father, reported the family to the police; how the family escaped the jail on New Year's Eve; returning to their original hiding place in the lumber processing building; experiencing antisemitism before the invasion of Poland; the hostility between Jews and Poles before the war; the town's population of about 3,000 before the war, including 150 Jewish families, most of whom were merchants; how the priest in Jodłowa kept the family's bedroom furniture while they were in hiding; the family's deteriorating health while in hiding; her husband's wish to go back to visit Poland and her refusal to do so because of postwar pogroms; traveling to Pilzno, Poland to stay with a relative after the war's end; moving to Bytom, Poland for about a year; traveling through Czechoslovakia and Austria to reach the American occupation zone of Germany; her mother's brother and sister, who lived in the United States; how she and her father, before leaving Jodłowa after the war, returned to their home to retrieve jewelry her mother had buried before going into hiding; selling the jewelry to the town's shoemaker; how she, her brother, and parents were the only ones from both sides of their families to survive the war; her brother's painful recovery from hip problems developed in hiding; immigrating to the Boston, Massachusetts in 1951 after spending about two years in a displaced persons camp; working as a seamstress and in shops; how her parents and brother joined her six months later; speaking

Polish, Hebrew, and German upon arriving in the United States, but not English; being able to send her daughter to college and graduate school; and being grateful for all of the opportunities she received in the United States.