

RUTH HELBREICH
RG-50.005.0022 (recorded 1984 in Los Angeles)

Ruth was born in 1926 in Warsaw to a well to do family of 3 sisters and one brother who are all still alive. In 1939 their father fled with them to the Russian part of Poland where the father continued his work in the paper business. Then her father and one sister and she crossed back into Warsaw, but her mother and 2 siblings were sent to Siberia. They were able to correspond up to the time the Russians declared war on Germany.

Ruth and her family moved into the Warsaw ghetto in the Spring, 1940. Her father had connections and was able to get food on the black market so they were not hungry. Ruth describes a vibrant life in the ghetto amid the horrors. When the Germans started sending people from the ghetto to the camps, Ruth and her sister were sent outside the ghetto to live in a convent. They didn't have ID They both work with small children in the convent until it became unsafe. They were sent to live with the Kupchinskis, who had taken over the father's mills.

After the Warsaw uprising in the summer of 1944, Ruth and her sister were sent to a slave labor camp of 15,000 in a small town in Germany. Then they were sent to Nordhausen where Ruth worked in the kitchen of a restaurant until April 1945 when they were liberated. Ruth found out that her father had died in the ghetto in 1943 fighting in the underground. Ruth and Helen were sent to Dora, a DP camp that used to be a concentration camp where they made bombs. She met her husband to be there when he was preparing work for the Nuremberg trials.

Ruth then was able to go to Paris, but then she married and return with her husband to Germany. She found that her mother and 2 other siblings had survived in Siberia. They ended up going to Israel, but Ruth and her husband sent to the US under the Truman quota.

Ruth talks a lot about Osnos, a little girl she cared for in the convent and with whom she was very close. Osnos ended up going to live with a surviving aunt in Israel and fought in the War of 1948. Ruth also spends time talking about her family members.