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Summary

Sonia Bornstein (nee Karwat) b. May 18, 1924 Długosiodło, Poland, youngest of 3 sisters, 4 brothers, describes life in small village, walking 3 km to school, father owned little store, celebration of Jewish holidays, became accomplished seamstress by 14 yrs. old; Fall 1939, bombings, "Germans took over... everyone scared to go out"; family fled to Bialystok got separated from brothers, sheltered in a school; Sonia went out to find brothers, hitch-hiked with Russian Army; excitement in returning, finding brothers had reunified with parents; fleeing with a "lot of refugees"; cattle train transport to Babruysk, Belarus; 2 yrs. in barracks but were free; 1941 war broke out, "moving from place to place...one time, 4 days without food"; in middle Asia, finding farm work in exchange for some food until it ran out; 1943, fleeing again to "place so terrible, I caught malaria, rain came", clay shelter fell apart and killed father; since Sonia had malaria, assigned "light work" standing with rifle for 12 hrs.; Russia govt rule, "if one day work missed in half yr., take off 25% wage"; mother passes away late 1943 or early 1944; "people were starving on street...not enough people to dig graves...wild animals getting to bodies"; work picking cotton; finding brother at end of 1944; joining Union of Polish Patriots, receiving literature on Auschwitz atrocities, thought writers "were crazy, took me long long time to believe"; liberation "exciting day"; with brother & new husband 1945, return to Poland; discussion on Alice "not proud of some Jewish people" that had joined Polish govt; settled in Breslau (Wrocław); brother went to Israel/died in Army; not able to get entry to America, having to get daughter's passport first (sent to husband's sister) and huge gamble that Red Cross would reunify them; after "9 long months" (of worry separated from her baby), Alice & husband enter US 7/21/64; finding work (husband/electrician - Alice/seamstress), difficulties learning English, pride buying first home, message to grandchildren "They should never have to go through war - my biggest wish."; Sonia shares relics & photos of brothers, Sonia/husband on ship coming to America (Queen Elizabeth); Sonia shares great pride in sharing photographs of children, including daughter that she had sent to US ahead of her.