

## **RG-50.054.0006**

### **Summary**

Miriam Bleich (also known as Miriam Wilner) was born in 1917 in Lwow, Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine) into an Orthodox family as the youngest of five children. Her father, Isaac, studied the Torah while her mother, Frieda (née Friemet) earned most of the income through a grocery store. She lived there until 1941 when the ghetto was organized, after which they moved to her mother's home town of Bobryka, where food rations were available to her age fifty-plus parents. The family was "Zionistic-minded". She had many non-Jewish friends from her public school, and frequently witnessed anti-Semitism.

Miriam was in her early Twenties when the war started. Her brother, who had been studying medicine in Siena, Italy, was unable to return to return there from a home vacation in 1939. He and all of her siblings ultimately perished.

She described her family life while under Russian control from 1939-41. When the Germans invaded, they gathered all the less able-bodied Jews and sent them away on trains, including her father and mother. Miriam describes how she and her sisters sought to use false papers to avoid execution around 1943. Only Miriam was successful by hiding in a root cellar. She then walked from Bobryka back to Lviv using her false papers. On arrival, she was obtained a job as a governess, changing her position many times, and withstanding a Gestapo interrogation. She visited a Jewish family in hiding, one of whom had been an earlier boyfriend of her sister. Miriam and he were married once the war ended. Just before the war's end, she went into hiding with this family, and thereby avoided another Gestapo visit to her employer.

She and her husband's family were able to escape from Russia to Poland shortly after the war. They immigrated to the U.S. through the sponsorship of her mother's sister, whose address came to her in a dream. They waiting for their visas in Romania where her daughter was born. In 1946, they went to Prague to get their visas and onto the U.S. in 1947.

She talks about the ongoing sorrow and burdens she felt. After her husband died in 1972, she talked more about her war experiences with her daughters.