

## Summary of Oral History: Frieda Traub

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This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer in 2022

Frieda Traub (married name), born in Lask, Poland, oldest of seven children, age five moved to Lodz, where Hasidic father led a torah school; she remembers a happy childhood with extended family of 90 people (she alone survived), attending the House of Jacob School under Rabbi Berliner, learning secular and religious subjects, Hebrew, Yiddish and, in gymnasium, also German; speaking Yiddish and Polish at home and with friends; experiencing commonplace forms of anti-semitism (commercial boycotts, extra taxes, etc.), until September 5, 1939 when Germans took Lodz (renaming it Litzmannstadt), and, among other forms of violence and harrassment, destroyed synagogues, looted Jewish homes, gouged Jews on merchandise, beat Jewish men and cut their beards and sidelocks; she recounts remaining with father in Lodz while mother and children sought refuge in Lask, mother and children returning to Lodz as ghettoization began; marching en masse to the ghetto carrying a few items of cookware and clothing, sharing apartments with strangers (Jews and non-Jews), sleeping on chairs and floor, redeeming weekly coupons for a single bread, making straw shoes for German soldiers; she recounts that she and father evaded a round-up by virtue of mass confusion; surviving hunger and eluding detection in the ghetto, knowing nothing of family's fate, witnessing the community's wholesale death from starvation and disease; she recalls summer '44, Chaim Rumkowski, leader of Lodz Jewish Council, announcing liquidation of ghetto and urging residents to join the "resettlement transport" from Lodz; she describes wearing as many clothing layers as fit, taking streetcar with father to train station, receiving an entire bread (as did all the assembled), packing into an airless/toilette-less freight car for the 20-hour trip to Auschwitz; arriving Auschwitz to a "sea of Nazis" conducting a selection, losing sight of father forever, being "processed," languishing, famished, in barracks for six weeks, twice escaping death when count-off stopped short of her place in line for the crematorium; she recalls the horror of four weeks in Ravensbruck prison camp, knowing its reputation for diabolic medical experimentation, and overwhelmed by the number of "gypsy" prisoners who occupied the bunks (forcing Jewish women to the barrack floor) and who stole the Jewish womens' food; she recalls a short transport from Ravensbruck to Mauthausen and better conditions there, with bunks, blankets, soap, towels, and soup in exchange for munitions factory work; she recalls Nazi liquidation of Mauthausen as the English approached, and transport by train to Bergen-Belsen, barely surviving starvation and so ill that, upon liberation, Red Cross left her for hopeless until a nurse later backtracked and marked her (red cross on forehead) as eligible for treatment; she expresses her indebtedness to Sweden, where she was sent to recuperate from TB, first to Katarina Hall, a school-cum-sanatorium in Malmo, then to Rosega (?) Sanitorium, then to a convalescent home in Vikarbyn, and finally to Farnabreick(?) a kibbutz-like DP camp catering to observant Jews where, at the end of 1946, she met her husband, who was caring for his convalescing brother (both Bergen-Belsen survivors); she relates that she and Traub transferred to the Storholmen DP camp and worked at a paper factory, transferring again to a brush factory in Husqvarna where they married (March 25, 1947), and later had a son; she expresses gratitude to the Cleveland Telsa Yeshiva's Rabbi Meisels (Farnabreick friend) and the Jewish Family Service for helping them settle first in NYC, where Traub worked as a house painter and

became a shochet, and then again in Cleveland, where Moishe Traub obtained a job as an inspector for Swift Foods and where children Chaim, Rivka and Chane were raised.