

CH A I A B O I M A N

RG-50, 120\* 0240

Start tape 1

1:00 to 1:33

**Background** She was born in 1924 in Lachwa, small town near Warsaw. Describes the mostly observant/Zionist Jewish population which doubled in size to 2000 with refugees following the German occupation of Western Poland.

Describes her orthodox family with seven children (she next to youngest), parents owning a general store and adequate income. Her father especially a charitable person, helping those in need and respected in his community. Their home was always full of guests and also visited by the Rebbe. All children participated in youth movements and went to Jewish Yavne schools. Oldest brother immigrated to Palestine in 1933, second joined Polish army. Also describes their good relationships with the peasants in nearby areas with whom they were dealing.

1:30 to 1:55

**Russian Occupation Period** Little anti-Semitism in Lachwa by Poles. Started hearing about the war only when refugees started coming into town. Russians wanted the Jews to go to Russia – Siberia - but the borders closed. Thus most stayed in Lachwa. Describes how the Germans entered after the Russians retreated. Described how everybody hid at home in fear. Locals were stealing Jewish property. Russians closed borders and prevented Jews from escaping . Describes their home as the Germans entered

1:56 to 2:20

**Germans's Entry and Life under the German** She describes the fear that kept everyone hiding at home while the "locals" plundered Jewish homes. Two days later the Germans entered. .They appointed the Judenrat, (in which her father served briefly) and

the Jewish militia, where her brothers served. Describes the Judenrat which met in her home.. Germans demanding valuables and jewelry, which was used as bribes. Brothers' life was saved through bribes. People were sent to work and how they were selected. Starvation and use of bribes to get food. Judenrat people lived in their home. Her family was somewhat better off due to their past connections with peasants. Describes the kinds of work the men were sent to do: roads, trains tracks, etc

2:21 to 2:30 **Woman with Photos** While the men worked outside, a woman came to Lachwa with their photos, actually sent by the Germans to uncover hidden relatives, Actually most men had already been executed, as their surviving family members slowly found out through grave ditches reported by peasants.

2:30 to 3:00

**The Ghetto is Established** on Passover eve of 1942. She describes how the transfer occurred and where people were sent to. Her family house was anyway in the designated Ghetto area, so others joined them. Their eight family members occupied the bedroom. Judenraat other rooms .Her older brothers used the shed in their back yard, preparing escape or resistance, including weapons.

2:34 to 2:38 Shows photos of her two older brothers and tells of their plans for resistance and revenge

Describes difficult life in the ghetto, starvation, bartering goods for food (with the help of Jewish police). Relatives from liquidated Davidgorodok came to live in Lachwa. Her parents' supportive attitude to sons and the underground. Describes relationship and events inside the Ghetto.

3:00 to 3:30

**The Revolt** Describes incipient rumors and signs regarding planned liquidation of the entire ghetto population by the Germans.. Underground youth weigh options including joining partisans,. Decide to resist. Forty five people finally escaped -- all other taken to the ditches and apparently killed. Describes the actual flaring up: fires destroying trucks and houses, crowds running to the gate. Older brother killed after axing German , wounded younger brother jumped into river , locals waiting with sacks to plunder the

Ghetto inhabitants' belonging. Describes her 10 KM run with others to the river Pretieks (?), where she found her younger brother. Ended near partisans.

3:30 to 4:00 (end tape 1)

**Life with the Partisans** The partisans accepted them because they brought a gun. She and her brother were included among the 22 who were accepted by the Partisans, although lived in a separate camp. Described their responsibilities and daily life in the woods.. Men participated in military and sabotage acts and women worked in the kitchen, and sewing clothes. . They were not always spared anti-Semitism and had to prove themselves constantly. Describes how they managed everyday life as the winter approached.. Mentions several of the partisan commanders and their attitudes (Names?). Had little information about what was happening elsewhere. Brother told her about their father's initial escape from Lachwa but subsequent death. Jewish members were excellent fighters, fought for revenge. Eventually they joined the main Partisan group on the island (in the river swamps), but their group kept their cohesive nature and relationship. Life in the Woods

4:01 (start tape 2) to 4:32

**Life in the woods(during the Oblata?)** Tells about the fate of several members , Lachwa people and relatives, which she either saw or heard from eyewitness. Very difficult winter in '42/43, surrounded by wolves and escapes into the freezing swamp when the Germans attacked.

Spent several months in hiding . Eventually returned (had frozen supplies in the woods), joined retuning partisans although encountered anti-Semitism. Tells about the Vlasov (?) group of Russians who joined the Germans to uncover partisans. Partisans liberated some Jews.

4:32 to

**Russian Approach and Liberation** Heard approaching front. Her brother was killed among the first with others in heroic last battle with ambushing Germans.. With few survivors, they walked, caught and jumped off the train at Lachwa. Found only small remains on mass grave site, and empty destroyed ghetto homes. .

4:32 to 4:50

**Life After Liberation** Moved to live in Luminiev and worked in restaurant, Met and married her husband whose tailoring skills provided employment and safety in hospitals. They then moved through Lodz, Berlin and Ferenwald, . trying to get to the American zone in search of illegal immigration to Palestine. Eventually got to Cyprus and the British who returned them all to France and Bergen Belsen.

4:50 to 4:55 (end of tape 2)

**Final Arrival in Palestine/Israel** In May 1948 finally arrived in Haifa and joined her oldest brother in Tel Aviv. Her daughter was born and husband joined the Israeli army. Now their children help them deal with the memories of the terrible past and many losses.

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Translated and transcribed by Hava Bonne'

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