

## RG-50.233.0132

### Summary

Matylda Szymaniak, born 2/27/1913, possibly in Lvov, Poland. Five brothers and 1 sister. Family assimilated and some were baptized. Went to Zofia Strzalkowska high school and then to pharmacy school. Met and married first husband, Hendryk Schnejd and moved to Klucze where he worked in a paper factory. When war began they tried to move back to Lvov but were stopped. She was shot by German planes strafing the road. They returned to Klucze where husband served as a translator until German commandant told them to leave town. Using an *ausweis* they went to Sosnowiec where they worked in a factory owned by one Skopec. They lived in the factory after Germans took their furniture. Skopec then moved them to an aluminum factory in Strzeiszyce. Many Silesians (volksdeutsche) worked there. Moved into small ghetto in 1943. One day, they were ordered to line up in the square. Old people and children taken by Germans for liquidation. She was taken by train to a forced labor camp while husband sent to Blechhammer camp. While in her camp, she developed jaundice but managed to escape briefly, returning after cutting herself on barbed wire. She escaped again on Palm Sunday (year unclear) and went to the nearby train station where she ran into the wife of her overseer who did not turn her in but traveled with her. She left the train at Katowice and went the home of a man named Nowak to rest and change clothes. Then she took a streetcar to Dabrowa Gornicza and walked from there Strzeiszyce. She went to the home of husband's old boss, Romus Korona and wife hid her. Old friends brought her old jewelry which she sold to go to Andrychow on the German border. Then she walked across a swamp and into Poland. She then went to Cracow to the home of Anna Krachkowska (whom she nominated for Yad Vashem) whose husband, a socialist, died at Auschwitz. She stayed 3 months. Using forged papers, kemmkarte, she went to Warsaw where she contacted her mother-in-law. Got better forged papers which identified her as Zofia Knapek, a Pole. She went to the Malinowski family on Kruszcza St. where she stayed along with others. During the Warsaw uprising, she worked as a nurse in a hospital. She saw Jews killing captured Germans. When the uprising collapsed, she moved to other hospitals. At one, she met well known actor Mieczylaw Milecki from Vilna. Ultimately, she ended up in Stalag IVB in Zeitham near the Elbe River with wounded, still posing as "Schvester Zofia" a Pole. As the war neared the end the Germans killed many prisoners. After the camp was liberated, ~4/20/45 she returned to Poland and learned that her husband had been killed at Gros Rosen. Ultimately, she married her second husband who had been a family friend. His name was Feliks Miller, later changed to Stanislaw Szymaniak to avoid antisemitism. He apparently died in 1988. She has one daughter and 2 grandchildren.