

## Oral History: Doba-Necha Z. Cukierman, August 1996

Doba-Necha Cukierman, née \*Zeistein, born January 9, 1910 in Lublin, Poland, describes: Her entire family, paternal and maternal, being from Lublin and all perishing in the Holocaust; her father's family being very wealthy and owning many properties in Lublin; having four brothers and two sisters; living in a traditional Orthodox Jewish home and attending a Jewish school; taking a clerical course and getting a job in a solicitor's office; having a happy and loving home life; at the beginning of the German occupation, witnessing SS brutalize two Jews and beat her father and brothers; widespread Polish anti-Semitism stoked by the Catholic Church; overcoming anti-Semitism to enter a nursing program; two brothers trying unsuccessfully to emigrate to Palestine in the 1930s; being aware of events in Germany by reading newspapers, but not many people believing things would get so bad; getting married and having a daughter in 1939; the German invasion and her husband being mobilized; her husband deserting from the army; anti-Jewish laws being put in to effect; in November 1939, her family home and possessions, including food, being seized; barely avoiding arrest; her father being arrested, badly beaten, and released; in March 1941; being rounded up along with thousands of Lublin Jews for transport and resettlement, but being sent home for lack of transport and told to return the next day; going instead to her in-laws' house in \*Stronow [approx. 35 km from Lublin]; fleeing with several family members; being taken in by a peasant family in \*Stronow, where they remained from March 1941 to 1942; obtaining false Christian identity cards; in October 1942, following a German directive for all Jews to assemble for transport, leaving her young child with friends and returning to Lublin to hide out; discovering that Jews were absent from Lublin; seeing papers saying Poland is free of Jews; on November 14, fleeing Lublin, almost being caught before she boarded a train to Felin; spending a few months in Felin; being aware of Germans and Poles hunting partisans and Jews in the nearby forest; hearing of the German defeat at Stalingrad; returning to \*Stronow and reuniting with her husband; hiding in the forest from March 1943 until July 1944; returning to Lublin and hearing that her brother was one of 350 prisoners murdered by the Germans; learning of another brother being shot by the Germans in 1942; her parents being killed in Glusk and the destruction of the Jewish cemetery there; hearing about the death of her sister; emigrating to Israel after the war; returning to Lublin in 1994 to try to find her family's graves; finding a memorial to a sister executed among 500 people in a hospital on April 1, 1942; creating a memorial to her family in Glusk; after the war, many Poles continuing brutal treatment of Jews; about 300 of her extended family not surviving the Holocaust; a daughter born in 1945 and grandchildren; emigrating to Australia from Israel; feeling a need to bear witness in the face of Holocaust deniers; having episodes of doubting the existence of God but remaining a believer. [Note: a second tape, not included with this one.]

\*Transliteration as heard