

## **RG-50.407.0118**

### **Summary**

Jadzia Opat, born on October 28, 1924 in Pabianice, Poland, youngest of four children: sister Gitta Davidovitch born 1911 and lives in Israel, brother Schmulek Hooper born 1915 and lives in Haifa, sister Sala Major born 1919 and lives in Sydney; paternal grandfather Suluf Hooper; maternal grandfather Nathan Weizman; father, in textile business, was a fervent Zionist; discusses comfortable childhood with Jewish friends; in 1936 one of few Jews admitted to Catholic secondary school; later expelled for a fight with a non-Jew and then attended a private Jewish school; loved to read and spoke Polish at home; attended services with mother only on high holy days; became aware of atrocities against Jews in 1938; recalls looting and people trying to escape during German invasion in fall 1939; had to surrender house in 1939 to German landlord but remained in Pabianice with a friend; moved to aunt and uncle in Czeszochowa in December 1939 with grandfather and Sala; remembers life was initially good in Czeszochowa with sufficient food; attended a Jewish high school, in about 1942 transferred with father, mother and Sala to ghetto (Gitta and Schmulek were in Bialystock), 5-6 streets in old part of Czeszochowa, where they had a large room with a communal kitchen and no bathroom; told of the Jewish Council choosing people in ghetto for forced labor; given the job of sorting clothing from empty apartments and was to hand over any money or valuables found; told of an unsuccessful plot by Jewish men in the ghetto to kill a German, after which many were rounded up and shot by German soldiers in front of ghetto residents; related a close call in the ghetto when she and a friend hid during a roundup of women but were spared even when found by a German soldier; later made to work in Hasak looking for gold and valuables in Jewish cellars, found a bag of diamonds belonging to a jeweler named Lurier and turned it in; concealed her family money and jewelry in clothing in Hasak, using it on occasion for bribes such as getting her sister treatment when sick or buying extra food; recalled Director Lied of the Hasak munitions factory was not interested in killing but just getting work done and personally spared the two daughters of his seamstress Frau Schnitzer; used valuables and contacts to intervene in deportation of sister Sala and friend Fela Hoopert, whose grandfather was brother of Jadzia's grandfather; aided by kind Pole David Schepchvitch to hide with Sala and a friend as Germans planned to raze the ghetto; after liberation went with Sala to Czeszochowa, then Lodz, then Bialystock taking whatever transport available; has very negative view of non-Jewish Poles; married briefly after war; divorced in Germany and went to Israel in the 50's; visited Sala in Sydney in 1962 where she met and married David and raised two girls in addition to David's two girls; finds Australia to be paradise and a tolerant country with a good climate; visited Poland in 1991; has discussed war experiences but has suffered depression and just wants to forget; from her large extended family only her aunt Eva survived with her two children, living in Frankfurt, as well as her siblings.