

### **Oral History: Michele Bude, September 1, 1998**

Michele Bude, born in Traupis, Lithuania (no date given) describes: coming from a religiously observant home; her three sisters; being uncertain of her birth date and unable to obtain any information on her family from the Lithuanian government; her father's animal skin/pelt business; her mother helping with people's medical problems; a small Jewish community of about seven families in Traupis; a happy childhood; experiencing anti-Semitism, particularly around Christmas and Easter; moving to the larger (but still small) town of Raguva; belonging to Mizrahi; "hating" Lithuanians for what they did between 1939 and 1945, and never returning there; hearing about Hitler persecuting Jews but not believing it; helping Jews emigrate to Israel/Palestine; life under the Soviets in 1939; getting married in 1940; the Nazis arriving and confiscating homes and businesses; being forced to wear Jewish armbands and patches; being forced into a ghetto governed by a judenrat, which only looked after itself; her child being taken in a roundup of children and never being seen again; trying to help other Jews, including by giving up her own food; fear and insecurity of life in the ghetto; escaping the ghetto but being caught and jailed; encouraging her husband to escape and seek revenge; being surprisingly freed from jail; laboring in the ghetto; the beginning of deportations; on November 5, 1943, witnessing arrests and executions; her husband being taken to Dachau (discovered after the war); her parents being taken away and not heard from again; being mistaken by the Germans for a Lithuanian and freed; feeling fortunate throughout the war to have survived; being grateful for being taken in by Australia; purchasing 15 acres of land to farm there; losing her entire family; [in response to a question] recounts the liquidation of the ghetto and being taken by train to Stutthof (Szutowo) concentration camp in Poland; being subjected to a selection and assigned to one of eighteen barracks; doing forced manual labor; suffering through many beatings; the daily routines in the camp; the interviewer, Phillip Maisel, being in Stutthof at the same time; being taken with her sister to labor on a farm; [in answer to a question] her conclusion that, had she not been on the farm where she was able to steal some food and had better clothing, she would not have survived at Stutthof; being sent to dig trenches; her sister recovering from typhus; being taken on a death march near the end of the war; contracting typhus and being nursed by her sister; running away in about April 1945 after the Germans abandoned their posts; making her way to Łódź; finding a sanitarium in Łódź, where she was able to recover from tuberculosis; her sister working in a Russian army hospital; deciding not to return to Lithuania after hearing that Russians were mistreating Jews there; going to Salzburg and Föhrenwald; finding a job in a kitchen; going to Dachau/Munich after learning that her husband was an inmate there; learning that her husband had died on January 4, 1945; returning to Föhrenwald; having a fight with her sister, who went to Italy; remarrying.

[Note: Interview ends abruptly at 3:00:26.]