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Summary

Chana Rene Rosenblatt, born in Warsaw, Poland in 1925, describes: her parents wanting to move to Paris because of antisemitism in Poland; moving to Paris in 1930; her father struggling to earn a living until he could obtain a French work permit; having a good life in Paris, with many friends; her parents' origins in Poland; her mother, Lazia Woolstof [PH] née Scheinfeld [PH]; her father, Motka Woolstof [PH]; a very happy childhood; membership in the Socialist Bund headed by Léon Blum; speaking Yiddish at home; her mother being very religious and her father not religious; all of her friends being Jewish and not experiencing antisemitism at school; remembering the German entrance into Paris in 1940; escaping Paris to a village [unnamed] but returning to Paris when the Germans occupied the village; wearing the yellow star; the French police doing the Germans' bidding; in 1942, refusing to answer a knock on the door and hiding in the cellar; being warned the family was in danger; finding a guide to take them into the French free zone; her father being taken by police to a French camp; her mother becoming ill and going to a hospital in Limoges; moving with her mother to an [unidentified] town; her father, still in the camp, receiving permission to visit his wife and daughter for a few days; meanwhile, receiving word that the camp was to be cleaned out, her father escaping to Nice and being joined by Chana and her mother; being moved to the town of Mazues [PH] with a large group of Jews; six months later, back in Nice, being told they would be sent to Italy but unable to do so when the Germans occupied Nice; renting a room from a woman for three months; with the help of a Jewish organization, obtaining false papers and making contact with the French resistance; told Nice had become too dangerous and given train tickets by the resistance along with about thirty other Jews; traveling to a small village [unnamed]; deciding to rent a room on their own instead of staying at a hotel with the other Jews; finding out the following morning that the hotel had been raided by the Gestapo; traveling with other Jews on an outing to Toulouse; the Gestapo stopping the train but her papers passing scrutiny; witnessing the arrest of a Jewish man whose family was waiting for him, but not feeling secure enough to tell the family what had happened; liberation and the resistance taking revenge against Germans and French collaborators; returning to Paris; working for a Jewish organization to help decode the names of people in hiding; feeling great sadness upon hearing stories from her neighbors of Jews who were lost; not being a religious person but believing in destiny; being young and not feeling frightened during the occupation, thinking only that it was necessary to avoid the Germans; wanting to go to Israel but deciding to accompany her parents to Australia (in late 1947); admiring and feeling grateful to the brave people in the French resistance; not being able to comprehend the monstrosity of Germans who appeared normal as they marched into Paris; three generations of her family left behind in Poland all having been gassed; finding Australia strange and backward compared to France; raising a family and feeling lucky to have come to Australia; hoping her descendants will remember the lost family in Poland.