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Summary

Clara Walters (née Klein), born in Belz, Poland on May 30, 1930, discusses her father Menashah and mother Tzipporah. Two sisters, Sarah and Rachel, both older. Very religious and Kosher home. In a Jewish part of town. One large room in house without electricity, running water and a dirt floor. Very poor, but uncle brought them chickens and occasional meat. Grandfather also lived with them. She went to school until age 11. Before the war the Polish students were very antisemitic, calling Jewish students "bloody Jews." She did have some Jewish education. When the war began, the family fled after Russian soldiers who had occupied their part of Poland warned them of imminent German occupation. They went to Lvov where conditions were bad. Other refugees actually returned to Belz. At some point, her family was ordered to go to Siberia by train and later by ship. She went to a Russian school and her father worked in the forest until he died from pneumonia. Older sister Rachel stayed in Lvov but later came to Siberia after the Germans occupied Lvov. The family was released from Siberia and they went to Uzbekistan. Rachel became the head of the family when her mother died from malnutrition circa 1942 in Uzbekistan. Clara was put in a Russian orphanage along with her sister, Sarah. Eventually, they left Uzbekistan and went to Teheran where Sarah died, leaving Clara on her own. At some point, she went to India with other Jewish students and teachers, where she lived for 6 months. She then went by ship to Egypt and then to Palestine where she settled in Petach Tikva. Again, she returned to school and worked 2 hours after class on the kibbutz. She lived 5-6 years on the Kibbutz and, after leaving, felt it was a big mistake to do so. She worked as a telephone operator, living first in Jerusalem and later Tel Aviv. She said it was a "tough life," always worrying about the Arabs. She met her husband in Israel and ultimately left for Australia in 1955. She is happy in Australia as she has 3 children and some grandchildren, all in Australia. She misses Israel and visits frequently but will never return to Poland although she wants her grandson to see the camps.