

Interviewee:	<u>KESSELER</u> , Liza	Date:	January 18, 1983
Interviewer:	Janice Booker		
Audio tapes:	1 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Liza Kessler, nee Rak, was born in the Ukrainian town of Vinnitsa, located on the Polish border between Kiev and Odessa. A center of Jewish learning, it boasted 15 Jewish schools. Liza graduated from a Jewish high school, married and had two children. Liza describes how in July, 1941, after a German bombing raid, Polish Jews fled into her town. She heard reports from them that the Jews were herded into the synagogue and burned. Liza with her two children, and sisters-in-law and their children fled with the 'echelons' (transports which carried machinery). They boarded a barge for Central Asia. In November, 1941 they arrived in Georgia. They stayed on a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) until the Germans came. They then fled further East to Uzbekistan, finally landing in Bukhara where they stayed until the end of the war. Liza describes harsh conditions: food rationing and bitter cold. Liza's sisters and parents were murdered in mass killings.

After World War II Liza went back to Poland with her second husband, a Jewish Polish national. Because it was too much like Russia, they left and were smuggled into the American zone in Austria via Czechoslovakia. Liza and her family stayed in Austria for five years. They were aided by the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). Finally, in 1950, through an aunt in Philadelphia they received papers and were able to enter the United States as part of the quota.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Bukhara

Refugee Aid Organization

Personal Narrative, Jewish

Russia

World War II, 1939 - 1945