

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Cooper, Anna

Date of interview: 8/31/1995

Summary: Anna Cooper, born in February of 1937, first lived in Goverova, Poland, which is near Warsaw.

Her mother died early on due to natural causes and her father continued to run the mill. She grew up very close to her family and they stayed in close contact during the war. They all lived in a small town with a strong religious community. Anna doesn't have any memories of her own about the war because she was a baby at the time. All of her knowledge about it comes from her father telling her stories about what they all endured. He said that it all started when their town's temple was set on fire in 1939. They were lucky enough to find somewhere to hide at their friend's store. Unfortunately they were kicked out by the police, and had to go back to the house to get their belongings. In the middle of the night they crossed the forest and went eastward to the Russian border to avoid the Nazis. They eventually came across a family that let them stay at their farm. They gave Anna's family a wagon that they used to travel to Bialistock. Her mother died in 1943 and soon after that her father and uncle were taken to a labor camp in Unengest. Meanwhile, her aunt sent Anna and her older brother to an orphanage because her aunt couldn't afford to care for them. It was devastating for Anna to watch to her aunt leave without knowing when she would see her again. After all, she was like a second mother to Anna because her mother had died at such a young age. Later that year, her aunt came back to bring her home to her dying grandmother. After she passed away, Anna went back to the orphanage and was separated from her brother.

Anna has good memories of the orphanage. She felt secure and she was given food and shelter. She did have terrible ear-infections, which later hindered her dream of becoming a nurse because she had lost a lot of her ability to hear. Anna was later sent to a different orphanage in Poland where her Uncle Moshe came and picked her up and then brought her to a kibbutz in Louch . She was unclear in explaining what that was but it may have been a kibbutz preparing young orphans to live in Israel. She stayed there for a couple of weeks and she was reunited with her brother. Right around this time the war was ending and there were numerous celebrations going on around her, but she didn't know why. She did, however, realize that a good change had taken place. Her uncle left, and eventually came back to take them home. The family decided that they wanted to leave Poland, however, it was very hard for all of them to come to a compromise about where to immigrate to. Eventually, they decided to move to Chicago. Anna lived there for a while and then moved to San Francisco for college, where she now lives. She became a teacher and has two daughters, named Naomi and Tamara.