

March, 12, 1998

Samuel, Eugenia
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project
Polish
RG-50.488*0008

[Approximately 45 min]

[Mrs. Samuel's story raises doubts as far as authenticity and credibility is concerned. It doesn't appear genuine: the story is full of action, yet the descriptions lack personal details. Additionally, Mrs. Samuel's tone is devoid of emotions. Based on the questions asked, the interviewers suspect that Mrs. Samuel gives an account of what she read, and not witnessed, about Treblinka.]

SUMMARY

Eugenia Samuel (nee Podleś) was born in Wólka Okrąglik near Treblinka in 1927, where she lived until 1932. In 1932 Eugenia moved with her immediate family to Warsaw and opened a pub; however she frequently visited Wólka Okrąglik during the war to get in touch with her relatives and to smuggle meat for her parents' catering business. While visiting Wólka, Eugenia Samuel was able to observe the Treblinka death camp from her uncle's field which was directly adjacent to the camp. She witnessed, documented and photographed the unloading of Jewish transports; however she has no evidence left. Eugenia can describe the camp with some detail; during the Treblinka uprising she was accused of being a Jewish fugitive and was temporarily detained in the death camp. She talks about the procedures on the unloading platform and comments on the depth of German deception, who welcomed foreign Jewish transports with flowers, thus preventing the Jews from guessing at their impending liquidation. She remembers the gas chambers and the burying of the gassed bodies; Mrs. Samuel adds that she witnessed a few strong Jews survive the gassing and comments that they were then shot by the guards. Eugenia explains how initially the bodies were burned in the ditches and that the ditches were covered with sliding panels to reduce the stench. She talks about her multiple arrests by the Germans in the Treblinka work camp and in Skaryszewska prison in Warsaw, and remembers her uncle and her father who were both captured and killed for aiding the Jews. Mrs. Samuel talks about testifying against the Ukrainian guards from the Treblinka death camp in Krasnodar (on the former territory of the ZSRR); she lists some of the names and functions of the accused. Eugenia talks about the Jewish transports and mentions that many Jews were shot during their attempt at escaping; she talks about the farmers who were forced to collect and bury the bodies. Mrs. Samuel adds that not only the Jews but also some of the Ukrainian guards tried to flee the camp; she explains that her uncle was supplying weapons to them. When asked if she witnessed any Jewish killings; she answers that she was close by when her Jewish friend **Salka** was shot;

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however she provides no details. In closing, Mrs. Samuel adds that she was invited to testify in Jerusalem; however the Polish officials refused to let her go.

[Prepared by Agnieszka McClure on 12/19/2010]