

July 9, 1999

Olga Szurkowska
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project
Polish
RG-50.488.0085

SUMMARY

[Approximately 22 min]

Olga Szurkowska was born in Białowieża on July 10, 1931 to a Byelorussian family. Before the Second World War she attended a Polish school in Białowieża together with other Polish, Byelorussian and Jewish children. She comments on the harmonious relations between all the children and recalls her favorite Polish teacher Ms. Janina **Krycka [Krydzka]**. Mrs. Szurkowska talks about establishing new schools after the Russians had entered Białowieża. There was a separate Polish school for Polish children and a Russian school for Jewish and Byelorussian children. She remembers the winter of 1939 when the Soviets deported all the local game wardens. Mrs. Szurkowska talks about the entrance of the Germans in 1941. She recalls that the former White Russians voluntarily joined the German Police. At that time the public schools were officially closed; she attended a private school together with other Belorussian and Polish children. She remembers two incidents when the Germans confiscated Jewish property and one incident when the Germans were forcefully evacuating the Jews (the destination is unclear). She speaks of a local woman, Emilia **Bagińska**, who denounced the remaining Russian soldiers to the Germans. Mrs. Szurkowska witnessed the funeral of Russian soldiers as well as the burial of a Byelorussian couple who had been hanged by the Germans.

[Prepared by Agnieszka McClure on 10/05/2010]