

## **RG-50.493.0070**

### **Summary**

Helga Fultheim (née Reichelsheim), a survivor from Nazi Germany, was born in Reichelsheim, Germany on July 9, 1926. Her family name was named after the village where her ancestors had lived since the 1500s. Her father, Gustav, was a butcher and her mother, Selma (Joseph) helped in the kosher butcher store and was a homemaker. Ms. Fultheim was raised an only child, since her older brother died when he was five months old. The family lived in a large two-family house with her grandparents living upstairs. She went to a local school until 1933 when she and one other Jewish student were picked out and told they would not be taught anymore.

Therefore, her family and other Jewish families in their village and surrounding villages established a Jewish school. She attended this school until Kristallnacht in November, 1938. Ms. Fultheim and other Jewish students were harassed and beaten up by local boys once they descended from their school buses. Until 1936, Jews and non-Jews continued to shop at her father's butcher and sympathetic shopkeepers sold food to them.

Life became unbearable with Kristallnacht. After coming home from school, she was sent to the synagogue where many Jews, including her father, were standing outside around a pile of Jewish holy books. Inside, four or five Nazis destroyed the synagogue with axes and large sticks. Then the pile of prayer books was burnt, and the Jews were told to circle around the fire, hold hands and dance. Most of the men in the town were taken to Dachau and Buchenwald but not her father who hid. When they returned several weeks later they looked terrible. Ms.

Fultheim's parents decided to send her on the Kindertransport to Great Britain, and she left on June 12, 1939. She would never see her parents or grandparents again. She was greeted in England by wealthy family friends who treated her very well. But most of the time there she spent on a farm where she was treated well but where she had to work very hard under primitive conditions.

After the war an uncle in California was able to get a visa for her to the United States. She stayed with him for several months and met her husband there. Her husband had served in the U.S. military. After they married he developed a very successful cattle dealing business. They had two children. Her husband died suddenly of a heart attack in 1967.