

## **RG-50.493.0078**

### **Summary**

#### **Part 1 of 2**

Clara Gonda, born in Hungary on January 4, 1915, describes: her natural father dying just before her birth; a happy childhood and beautiful memories growing up mostly on her grandparents' ranch; attending a Jewish elementary school and middle school, and a Protestant high school and then university; attending medical school, where she was the only woman; being unable to practice medicine because of anti-Jewish restrictions; being given some patients by sympathetic doctors; marrying a colleague, but being unable to live together; being able to practice medicine in a Jewish hospital; her stepfather, whom she regarded as her real father, Nikolas Tobai [PH]; experiencing some antisemitism, only occasionally by the teachers; encountering stronger anti-Semitism in university; being moved into the ghetto in 1944, shortly after she Nazis occupied Hungary; working in the ghetto hospital; the ghetto population growing to about 15,000; being taken to work at the brick factory; watching a favored teacher commit suicide; her husband being sent to several forced labor camps; in summer, being taken by rail with little water and no food; arriving at an unknown concentration camp and undergoing selection; learning later that she was in Auschwitz and encountering Mengele; not seeing her parents; being sent to a small barracks; suffering in the heat; watching a prisoner be beaten by Mengele; being among 800 women selected in September to be transferred to Ravensbrück; [answering a question] never having heard of Auschwitz before she was sent there; in Ravensbrück, being forced to stand outside for days.

#### **Part 2 of 2**

[Asked to further describe life in Auschwitz] being given little, and horrible food; thirst being worse than hunger; being very ill and being protected by other prisoners; learning only later that her parents would have been killed early on; witnessing Mengele's selections but not being aware yet of his experiments; being identified as a physician and taken to Berlin to work at an infirmary; being overwhelmed by the number of patients she had to care for; telling a camp officer that receiving more food would mean higher survival rates and better work; the officer responding that Germans at the front also had too little food, and the Jews would be dead anyway; being the only physician at an airplane factory and unable to cope with the illnesses and industrial accidents; having little medicine or implements to treat the sick or wounded; her spirits being raised when she was given the assistance of another physician, who turned out to be the source of information on the fate of her parents; being forced to state that some prisoners died a natural death and these records being burned; in early spring, being force-marched to a larger camp and being unable to recall its name; the presence of political prisoners in addition to Jews; being liberated by the Russians; being taken to Krakow and then on to Hungary; reuniting with her husband and finding work in a Hungarian hospital; joining her brother, an engineer, in the U.S.; she and her husband becoming psychiatrists and settling in Long Island.