

Salomea Gemrot's Railway ID



This is a false document, the first that said my surname ?Gemrot?. The picture was taken especially for this document, in Tarnow at the beginning of 1944. The photographer liked it so much, that he put it on a window-display. I was frightened that someone would recognize me. Of course I did not ask him to take it off for obvious reasons. Friends of mine from my home village, the Wisniowski family, changed my documents to say I was married and my last name to Gemrot, they managed to get an official stamp saying that I was a wife and they even went to the local priest for this. Wilhelm Gemrot, who's name I took, was a son of the family I was working for in Niepolomice near Krakow. I got that job after I escaped from the Rzeszow ghetto in late 1942. When Wilhelm found out my situation he offered his help. After my escape from the ghetto I was hidden by Polish families in villages. Each of these families was threatened by neighbors. Everywhere, wherever I was. I saved my life, but I had to move from one place to another, using my contacts. I couldn't stay anywhere longer, unfortunately, because Poles are not tolerant and anti-Semitism runs deep in them - well, not all of them, but most of them, yes. Yes, so it was very difficult for me to survive, because there were immediately suspicions and denunciations, so on, and no one wanted to keep me. But my friends, who risked their life for me, helped me. And then, when I had this new name, Gemrot, no one could say anything, because I had a name that was not a wartime name [S.G. uses this term to describe false non-Jewish names assumed during the war with hope of assuring survival]. Because before that I had some pretty bad wartime names [S.G. used the names Maria Tomaka and Maria Kloc when in hiding]. And I couldn't be touched because of that name. No one had the courage to denounce me.