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Summary

John (birth name, Jan) Migut was born January 15, 1934 in Lukawiec, Poland to father, Jacenty, and mother, Jadwiga, as one of seven children, four boys and three girls: Ted, Mary, Janina, Joe, Stanley, John and Bernice. The family Roman Catholic and very observant. In 1939 before the war, his father moved the family farther east to Liczkowce (near Ternopil, now in the Ukraine) in order to expand sufficiently to provide a legacy to his children. Poles were a minority in this region, the majority were Ukrainian.

John describes how his brother, Ted, survived the war after he was separated shortly before Russian authorities moved his family to the East. His mother was born in Łańcut near his birthplace.

He describes in detail what happened on Feb. 10, 1940 when they saw their first soldiers of the war as Russians arrived and ordered the of the Poles in the village; Ukrainians were permitted to stay. The families were loaded on boxcars for about a two-week transit to Novosibirsk, Siberia. Conditions were harsh. It was later learned that the Poles in this region were removed in order to populate it with Russians and reclaim it. Families they knew from Lukawiec were not sent away.

On arrival, his group of about 150 people lived in barracks with daily work details cutting trees. The older children were put into camp schools, though he and Bernice were too young. Conditions were harsh and food was scarce. His family was the only one whose children survived. No new transports arrived.

Through an arrangement by Polish statesman, Sikorski, Stalin provided amnesty to most captive Poles in 1941. Along with other families, all eight members of his family traveled for three months by train to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. They had to hide periodically as they had no papers and received no official help. They stayed at an abandoned hut about 15 miles outside Tashkent. His father and two daughters were in a Tashkent hospital; Mary died there.

John and Bernice were placed in an orphanage during the days. They were often indoctrinated against their religion by the authorities despite the resistance of their mother. The family contacted a nearby Polish army detachment of the Second Corps, commanded by General Anders, and were permitted to remain. In the summer, 1942, they moved with the army as it deployed to Krasnovodsk near the Caspian Sea, and boarded a ship to Phalevi (?), Iran. The International Refugee Association then helped them to Karachi, placing them on a convoy of ships that went to Mombasa, Kenya; one of the ships was torpedoed with many deaths.

His mother and six of the children were settled in a well-prepared camp at Tengeru near the end of 1942 numbering about 5,000 refugee Poles; some Jews were included as well from the group in Siberia. They remained eight years until 1950. While there, they learned that John's brother, Ted, was alive and living in Poland. The ship *General Balloon* brought them to the U.S.

in 1950. They went by train to Chicago and settled there. His brother visited often but he stayed in Poland.