

Witold Pawlikowski
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Witold Pawlikowski, born on July 15, 1931 in Łódź, Poland, discusses his parents and being an only child; his father's work as an elementary school teacher in the villages surrounding Łódź; an uncle's arrest by German authorities; his father's service in the Polish army before World War II and later being transferred to Dolina, Poland (today: Dolyna, Ukraine), a town near Lwów, Poland (today: Lviv, Ukraine) in April 1939; his grandfather's death during the 1918 influenza pandemic; his father's decision to go back to the army and his work training recruits; him and his mother joining his father in Dolina in July 1939; the invasion of Poland in September 1939 and the start of World War II; his memories of celebrating Christmas in Łódź; attending school in Łódź before moving; his mother's involvement in the Przysposobienie Wojskowe Kobiet (Female Military Training) organization; seeing President of Poland Ignacy Mościcki during his 1937 visit to one of the camps run by the Przysposobienie Wojskowe Kobiet; his parents' patriotism and Christian faith; the city of Łódź; the death of his grandmother; being able to see the Carpathian Mountains from his family's apartment in a villa in Dolina; his father receiving orders to return to his army regiment in Łódź after the start of the invasion; the Soviet invasion of Poland on September 17, 1939; his father returning to Dolina, which was under Soviet occupation, after being wounded in the leg; his father's arrest by Soviet authorities and imprisonment at a local jail; managing to visit his father in jail once with the help of a Jewish acquaintance in October 1939; his mother traveling to Stanisławów, Poland (today: Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) in attempts to learn his father's whereabouts; learning later that his father was on an early 1940 transport and killed; being aware of deportations to Siberia; his and his mother's deportation on April 13, 1940; being loaded onto a train and not knowing where they were going; having to stop and transfer from a Polish train to a Soviet train when they reached the border before continuing east; being transported to a Soviet government-run farm; being assigned to share a home with a Ukrainian couple who had lived there since the Soviet famine of the 1930s; his mother's work cutting peat; fears of being reported for saying things against the Soviet Union; the 1917 Russian Revolution; being transported to another farm, this one for raising cattle; his mother's work as a cattle herder; living in a barrack with two other families; starting school in September 1940; learning Russian; how a school certificate and report card are the only documentation he has to prove his deportation; life at the cattle farm, which was located in the Siberian steppe; Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941; the Polish government-in-exile and its wartime activities; the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact; making friends with other Polish children on the farm; the Sikorski–Mayski agreement of July 1941, which liberated Polish citizens from Soviet camps and allowed free movement; Władysław Anders and the formation of Anders' Army; being transported south and traveling by train for six weeks; passing through Tashkent, Uzbekistan; arriving at a collective farm near Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan (today: Almaty, Kazakhstan); traveling to Tehran, Iran under the protection of the Polish Anders' Army; never receiving any documentation on his father's death; traveling to a port city on the Caspian Sea around Easter 1942; living in a civilian camp near Tehran for about two years run by British forces; other transports that arrived at the camp from the Soviet Union; receiving clothing donations from the United States; moving to an apartment in the city of Tehran; attending a Polish school in the city; traveling to Baghdad, Iraq in July 1945 before continuing on to Beirut, Lebanon; moving to a small town in the mountains north of Beirut and

living there until 1950; learning English; graduating from Polish high school; receiving visas to the United Kingdom and traveling there in July 1950 and being placed at a camp near the Lake District in England; moving to London on his own to look for a job and finding work at an engineering firm; immigrating to the United States and arriving in New York on February 14, 1951; moving to live with one of his mother's uncles in Ohio; moving to Baltimore, Maryland to live with another uncle; spending time with a Polish priest who had been in several Nazi concentration camps; finding work in engineering at a steel company; taking night classes at Johns Hopkins University in engineering; being drafted by the U.S. Army in 1955; being shipped to Germany to monitor the East-West Germany border; working at a headquarters near Nuremberg, Germany; getting U.S. citizenship; moving with his mother to Chicago, Illinois after his time in the U.S. Army; studying at the Illinois Institute of Technology and working as a draftsman at an engineering firm; working for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission from 1978- 2008 on dams; his reflections on his deportation to Siberia; getting married in July 1959; his daughter; visiting Poland in 1979; his reflections on the positive experiences following his deportation; and the importance of remembrance.

Family photographs and descriptions follow the interview.