

**RG-50.407.0064**

**Oral History: Henry Lipschitz, July 1996**

### **Summary**

Henry Lipschitz, born 1 March 1917 in Bielin \*, Poland [possibly Wielen near Czarnikau (Czarnkow)]. Lipschitz describes: His family, including his father, Moishe, mother, Zesu\*, an older brother and three younger sisters; his middle class family's two flour mills (still in existence); traditional Jewish life and antisemitism among Poles of his village; speaking only Yiddish in the home; how most of his family remained in Poland after Hitler's rise and ultimately perished; his surprise that the Zionist community also remained in Poland rather than leave for Palestine; beginning army infantry service in early 1939 and encountering antisemitism; after the German victory, witnessing the separation of Jews from Poles and execution of some Jews; being taken to Germany as a POW; being separated into national-religious blocs; being sent home to Poland after the Nazi-Soviet pact; working as a painter for the Nazi occupiers; being sent to the Lodz ghetto in 1942; being rounded up with thousands of Jews and being forced to hold many of them while a German officer named Grosman\* shot them; wanting to be shot, himself, and not understanding how he survived, but speculating that he was young and strong enough to work; watching his parents and sisters along with over 9,000 (out of a group of approximately 10,000) being sent to Chelmno by truck and hearing of this group's extermination by gas; believing this story while others did not; not wanting to be interviewed for this story but being urged to do so by his children and grandchildren; joining the fire brigade in the Lodz ghetto; conditions in the ghetto, including starvation; urging mothers to hide their children; watching trainloads of Jews being taken away; not feeling guilty for his killing of about fifteen Germans after the war [returns to this subject at end]; Jewish cooperation in selections for transport; final liquidation of the Lodz ghetto in August 1944; being transported by train to Auschwitz; selections at Birkenau and memories of seeing Mengele; details of existence and struggle for survival in the camp; being sent to Mauthausen and later to Ebensee Camp and survival ploys in those places; liberation and brief return to Poland where he found almost no one he knew alive; leaving Poland for Germany, where he met his wife in 1947; emigration to Australia in 1948; [response to request to elaborate on earlier comment] killing SS in retribution, with U.S. soldiers' encouragement; losing his belief in God; advising Jews of today to fight and "not be sheep." [Post-interview, shows various photos, prewar and postwar.]

\*Indicates transliteration as heard.