

Oral History: Godel Wroby, October 27, 1996

Godel Wroby, born in 1925, one of three children of Moishe and Prila Wrobletsky, the only Jewish family in the village of Mlynny, Poland, describes: a religious household; not encountering anti-Semitism within Mlynny; prior to the war, his father helping groups of Jews to find safehaven; the German invasion in 1939; being conscripted to do manual labor for the Germans; escaping to other villages in the area after receiving warning that Jews were being hunted; being together with his family and being able to live comfortably with the help of local Poles; preparing to flee again in advance of a roundup but deciding to stay with his mother; being rounded up and taken to Wielun, where he was separated from his mother and sister; never seeing his parents or siblings again; being taken to the Lodz Ghetto; meeting up with a cousin; being assigned to clean sewage in the ghetto and refusing to do so despite threats; being assigned to another manual work project; witnessing some people being taken away but not knowing yet about the concentration camps; being hungry and malnourished; being taken to a work camp in Skarzysko-Kamienna, where he was able to survive on the black market, selling things to free Polish workers who were doing precision work; the camp being divided into three factories (about 1943), labeled A, B, C; in summer, the Germans fearing Soviet advance, being sent via train in cattle car conditions to Buchenwald; taking revenge against brutal Jewish prisoner-overseers who came with them from Skarzysko; being sent early in 1944 with approximately 700 others to Schlieben; working at loading and unloading freight, mostly munitions components; several factories mysteriously (Wroby assumes sabotage) exploding, including one explosion Wroby survived; the factories being quickly rebuilt; in late 1944-early 1945 being transported to an unknown destination; falling into a coma-like sleep and awakening in a hospital in the Theresienstadt Ghetto; being liberated by the Russians; witnessing the liberated inmates taking brutal revenge on a scale similar to what the Nazis did to Jewish children in the Lodz Ghetto; being hospitalized again for several weeks; returning to his village in Poland to search for his family; being received kindly and cared for by two girls he knew; traveling with a surviving cousin to Lodz; joining a kibbutz group, which, its members giving up on Poland, attempted to emigrate to Palestine; helping smuggle some group members to Palestine but being unable to get there himself, moving to a kibbutz in Germany; becoming ill and being taken to Switzerland to recover; remaining in Switzerland for approximately three years; emigrating to Australia in 1950.