

03/15/1998

SAŁĘGA, Wiktoria
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project
Polish
RG-50.488*0019

The following interview was conducted with Mrs. Wiktoria Sałęga, who was born on January 2, 1913, in Garbów. In 1932, she moved to Trawniki, where she currently resides. In this interview, she discusses the start of the war and the establishment of a concentration camp in Trawniki. She also talks about the Jews, who she saw during the war, and describes the terrible crimes committed against the Jews by the Germans.

File 1 of 2

[01:] 01:03:08 – [01:] 15:22:24
00:00 – 15:24

She introduces herself: Mrs. Wiktoria Sałęga, born on January 2, 1913, in Garbów; says that in 1932, she and her siblings moved to Trawniki, where she currently resides; talks about the first day of the war; remembers German troops, airplanes, and machine guns in Trawniki; recalls the terror felt by the people; talks about the establishment of a concentration camp in Trawniki; says that she remembers the construction of the barracks and the transport of many Jews to the camp from different countries, such as **Czechoslovakia** and **Holland**, because her house was located next to the camp; says that she saw work being performed on the construction of the street lights; mentions that she would wash the clothes of one German officer; reveals that the German officer proposed that she work for him as a housekeeper, but she refused; says that he also invited her family to dine in the kitchen at the camp, but they never went; mentions an incident when one of the camp's cooks brought some rice with milk and noodles for her brother to eat; says that her brother did not understand German, and gave the food to the pigs; asserts that the German cook was very upset; explains that her sister gave potatoes to Jews and that the Jews would ask her brother for beans and noodles; says that he was very afraid of being caught by the Germans.

[01:] 15:22:25 – [01:] 34:35:25
15:25 – 34:36

Mrs. Sałęga discusses the terrible crimes she witnessed; talks about how Germans shot and burned Jewish victims; says that on November third, a truck full of German officers arrived at Trawniki and that Trawniki was surrounded and closed for two weeks; explains that no one was allowed outside between eight o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon; asserts that people were not allowed to watch what was happening, but that she witnessed the events; describes a specific incident: at eight o'clock in the morning, Germans filed into two columns on either side of a row of Jews; says that the Jews were forced into the ditches that had been dug beforehand and that the males went first, followed by the women and children; says that the men were silent, but the women and children cried and shouted; continues on to describe the process

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of the killing: first, the victims were forced to undress and place their clothes in one pile, and gold and money in another pile, then, the victims had to climb into the ditch, where they were shot by the Germans; says that the machine guns were placed at the edge of the ditch and that there were radios playing loud music to drown out the noise of gunfire and people screaming; asserts that some people said that the Germans threw grenades into the ditches to kill Jews who were not yet dead; remembers seeing German officers wearing rubber coats stained with blood; explains that because, during the two week period, her family was temporarily relocated, she did not witness the burning of the corpses of the victims; adds that her brother was given permission to return to Trawniki to tend to his farm animals; reveals that he witnessed the burning of Jewish victims' bodies; describes the burning of the corpses; says there were three wooden structures covered in gasoline; explains that Germans transported about 60 Jews from **Miliowo** to burn the dead bodies and that they had to take the bodies out of the ditches and place them in the fire; reveals that apparently the Jews from **Miliowo** were also shot and burned; says that some time later, local people searched for gold and money at the massacre site; mentions the establishment of a movie theater for Russian and Ukrainian prisoners, located opposite the villa where Commandant **Barteczko** lived; explains that there was also a storage building in the location; says that, one day, the Germans conducted a search of the homes because 60 blankets were stolen from storage; reveals that the Germans came to her house looking for the blankets; asserts that the blankets were purportedly stolen by Ukrainians.

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[02:] 01:16:12 – [02:] 16:04:09
00:00 – 16:06

Mrs. Salęga discusses the Jews who lived in Trawniki before the war; admits that she was not acquainted with them, that she only remembers one name – **Mordka**; says that there were many Jews in Trawniki and that the Jews owned grocery stores and fabric stores; says that she knew one Jewish man, who had a horse and carriage, and transported people from Trawniki to the market in Piaski, that he kept his horse at her brother's home; asserts that she did not see any Jews in Trawniki after the war, but that her brother claims that a few Jews managed to survive the Holocaust. *[The location of the interview changes. The interviewee and interviewer are filmed outdoors.]* During this part of the interview, Mrs. Salęga walks around outside, showing the house where she lived during the war; points to the window from which she watched the events she has described; indicates the location of the ditches, as well as the piles of clothes and gold; *[The camera moves to show the surrounding area.]* points to the area where the machine guns and radios were positioned and where the Jews were brutally murdered.