

RUTKOWSKI, Jan  
Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project  
Polish  
RG-50.488\*0230

In this interview, Jan Rutkowski, born August 21, 1929, in Wysokie Małe, describes the events he witnessed in his hometown during World War II. He talks about an encounter with German soldiers, the time he witnessed a Jewish woman being shot and taken away by a German, and how his family and neighbors helped the hiding local Jews.

Box 1, Tape 1

**[01:] 00:35:00 – [01:] 03:10:25**  
**00:00 – 03:15**

Rutkowski begins by noting his date of birth as August 21, 1929, in Wysokie Małe, where he lived during the war; discusses some of the local Jews like **Szlama Kryształ**; mentions that the Germans beat **Kryształ**; says that after the beating, **Kryształ** spoke with his father, complaining about the Germans; says he does not know what happened with **Kryształ**; guesses that he was taken away by the German soldiers together with other Jews to the ghetto in Ostaszewo.

**[01:] 03:11:00 – [01:] 06:10:25**  
**03:16 – 06:23**

He recalls when he went with a friend to Klimontów; says that on the way they met a woman who warned them about the Germans who were coming; remembers wanting to flee, but his friend said that if they ran away they could be shot; says that behind them there were a group of Jews with geese and a cart; says the locals told the Germans and subsequently he and his friend were searched by the Germans; remembers his friend had a rosary, prayer book, and a that he had a piece of reed with him, and that the Germans returned everything but the reed; says about 50 Germans hid on either side *[of the road]*, waiting for the Jews; says the Germans attacked and beat them, and then took them away to the hills; remembers continuing on to Klimontów but before they did, he asked for his reed back, which he received.

**[01:] 06:11:00 – [01:] 09:09:25**  
**06:24 – 09:29**

Rutkowski mentions when he went to Ostaszowo; says he met a Jewish woman bearing buckets; says she noticed a German approaching, and she began to scream and run away; says the German wounded her by a shot, threw her onto the coming cart and took her, still alive, to a cemetery; asserts he was an eye witness of this incident; asked about **Kryształ**, he explains that he was taken away with his wife and children, but does not know to where; says that they hid in Bogoryja; comments that his mother helped them by giving food; notes that the family hid in Bogoryja for about one year.

**[01:] 09:10:00 – [01:] 16:02:25**

**09:30 – 16:38**

He discusses armed bandits; says they attacked the Jews; says that one night they broke into his [*Rutkowski's*] house, beat and robbed him; says his mother stood up for him; says the bandits thought that his family was hiding Jews; recalls that his mother responded by saying that even if they did, it would not matter because the Jews are people as well; says the bandits demanded for nothing to be said about the assault; asked about the bandits, he says that after they had killed the Jews, they killed each other because of a misunderstanding about the distribution of the loot; says the Germans caught he and his friends and ordered them to dig graves for the Jews killed by the bandits; comments that there were five bodies; says the Germans made sure the Jews had been shot; recalls that one of the Germans said that he [*Rutkowski*] should not shoot to a Jew, but that it is better to order that they swallow a peg; says the German explained that then the Jew would suffocate.

[01:] 16:03:00 – [01:] 26:20:00

16:39 – 27:24

Rutkowski recalls **Genia Mazurkiewiczowa**, whom he guesses hid a Jewish girl, about the age of nine or ten, after the Polish bandits killed the girls' mother; says that when the war ended, some of the extended family took the girl back; explains how the girl became orphaned; says that the **Kmiecikowie** and **Tomalowie** families also hid the Jewish woman but that there was a time when the girl's mother came to his house after a peasant had stolen her bread, threatening her with a knife; says she explained that one of her children had already been killed; says that when the night came, his family refused to hide her because they were afraid of the consequences, but that they gave her bread and she subsequently left to look for shelter; says the woman was later shot during the winter in their field; says partisans contacted a village administrator, who told him to bury the body; says he covered it up with snow and that the body remained this way until the spring came, when the family finally buried the woman in the ground; says that after that incident, **Mazurkiewiczowa** took the woman's daughter under her wing and even baptized her in order to hide her more easily; says the girl stayed with **Mazurkiewiczowa** till the end of the war and that no one told on her; comments again on **Krysztal**, noting he was a fair, well-liked man, and the owner of a shop.