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Summary from Radio Kielce

Episode 20: Fulfil the duty – The Włodek Family, Węgleszyn, Jędrzejów County; The Story of Jurek Staszewski (Gerald Kaiser) part 1

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<https://polacyratujaczydow.com.pl/en/fulfil-the-duty-the-wlodkek-family-wegleszyn-jedrzejow-county/>

Stories about Poles

Jadwiga Włodek

Stanisław Włodek

Janusz Włodek

Krystyn Włodek

The people in the hiding

Gerald Kaiser (Jurek Staszewski)

The story told by

Eugeniusz Supernat (who lived in Węgleszyn during the war)

During the war, Jadwiga and Stanisław Włodek with their sons Krystyn and Janusz lived in Węgleszyn, the Jędrzejów county. Stanisław was the school master, Jadwiga was a teacher. They were both involved in the conspiracy movement. Their Jewish friends – Estera and Abe Oblęgorski informed the Włodeks that a young couple was looking for a shelter for their son who was just over two years old. In spite of fear, the Włodeks decided that they would take in the boy and say he was the cousin's son.

One spring evening of 1942 the boy accompanied by an elegantly dressed married couple arrived at the Włodek's house. That is how Krystyn Włodek remembers the encounter: Their faces were filled with sadness and nervousness. The boy's name was Jurek. His parents told Jurek that he came to his aunt, uncle and his cousins: Janusz and Krystyn. Krystyn and Janusz were only 10 and 12 years old, yet the parents decided to tell them the truth about the whole situation and not conceal anything from them. The boys were informed that Jurek was a Jew. They were also instructed to never leave him alone and what to tell people whenever they ask about Jurek. Jurek was a boisterous and cheerful child. He enjoyed playing with the older boys and going for forest trips. Jurek was strictly instructed by his parents to introduce himself with the false name: "I am Jurek Staszewski."

In 1943 the tragedy struck the Wodek family. Jadwiga Włodek and another teacher Mrs. Siekańska were arrested by the Germans. In Siekański's house the Germans discovered an illegal radio and then a Jewish family in the hiding. It was a married couple with a small son. They were all executed. As the Germans failed to detain the men: Stanisław Włodek and Mr. Siekański, their wives were deported to the Oświęcim camp. Jadwiga died a few months later. Since the day his wife was arrested, the Germans were seeking Stanisław Włodek and he was

constantly hiding. Stanisław's sons were left alone. They were responsible for little Jurek, a Jewish boy.

The first night after their mother's arrest, the Germans came again and took all valuables from the house. They did not pay attention to children who were terrified – recalls Krystyn Włodek: They went into the room and saw Jurek hidden under our father's desk, crying. Fear and nerves might have been the cause for Jurek to shout to the Gestapo officer, "I am going to shoot you." He demanded the words to be translated. We do not know how literal was the translation, because the Gestapo officer just laughed.

The boys worked for food at local farmsteads. Not everyone wanted to help them for fear of the Germans. A neighbour Mr. Łysek who was also involved in the Home Army movement helped the boys.

One day there the rumour that that Jurek was a Jew started circulating around the village. From then on it was very risky to take care of Jurek. One day the boy vanished and was no longer seen in the village, Stanisław Włodek secretly transported him to his sister in Przyłęk,. Jurek survived until the end of the war there."