

## FRANCISZEK BŁAWAT

I and my family were deported as Polish settlers from the Eastern Borderlands on 10 February 1940. This tragedy happened on Saturday morning [at] 5.00 a.m. NKVD men came to our village and gave us an hour [to leave]. We were escorted to the Kholoy railway station [?] And loaded into freight wagons. On this day the temperature [dropped] to minus 30. Children and the elderly were dying of cold. In the wagon in which I traveled, my 65-year-old mother and six of my neighbors' children died on the first [?] day of the journey. The ride lasted a whole month and we were brought to Kotlas in Siberia. From our transport we counted those who had died [in our opinion] from hunger and cold, as they were not children and the elderly. 49 people were missing. In Kotlas, they unloaded us from the freight train. Mothers with children were loaded on an open sled, and us men [had to walk] 700 km from Kotlas to Verkhnyaya Toyma, and from there to Verkhnyaya Mucha [?]-70 km from the collective farm in the depths of the forest. We were placed there in three barracks for 450 people and they began to feed us fish head soup. We paid 150 kopecks for one serving, and [we received] 200 grams of bread per person per day. For our hard work [on the other hand], for making a the quotas set for each person, they paid us four rubles from which they deducted some for ammunition—I ended up with 2.50 rubles per day and they treated us in the worst possible way. People were starving to death and the family [of the deceased] was forbidden to take the body to the cemetery. Only two people [per family?] were allowed to be buried. After 15 months, 250 people had starved to death. [When we went] to the commander of the settlement with a request to improve the diet, he replied: "We did not bring you here so that you will live long, but die as quickly as possible, Polish swine."