

WILLIAM GOOD

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



William Good (born Wolf Gaud), son of Dov and Chana, was born on April 27, 1924, in Stolpce, Poland. William had a

younger brother, Motl, and grew up in a conservative Jewish family. Dov owned a turpentine factory, and the family lived on the premises. Before he attended school, William spoke Russian, Yiddish, and Polish. His father wanted William to attend a Jewish day school, so William began speaking Hebrew, too.

After William finished elementary school, the family moved to Vilna, then part of Poland, where William could attend a Hebrew language high school. In Vilna, William joined Hashomer Hatzair, a Zionist socialist youth group. His Hashomer Hatzair leader was Abba Kovner, who would go on to write the *Vilna Ghetto Manifesto* and lead the ill-fated Vilna uprising (see [Pronouncement by Abba Kovner](#) in Unit 7 of Echoes & Reflections). In September 1939, after the German and Soviet invasions of Poland, Vilna became part of the Soviet Union. In October 1939, it became part of Lithuania. In June 1941, Vilna was occupied by Nazi Germany. A ghetto was established shortly thereafter.

On July 8, 1941, William was grabbed off a street in Vilna and forced on a death march to Ponary, about five miles south of Vilna. Ponary was a site of mass executions, where, from early summer 1941 to July 1944, 70,000-100,000 people were murdered, most Jews. William pretended to get shot and faked his own death. At night, he escaped from Ponary and found shelter in the home of a Polish peasant. He went back to the Vilna ghetto to warn his family and friends of what was happening at Ponary, but people did not want to believe him. His family, however, left

Vilna and hid in various locations. His brother was caught and his mother surrendered in order to see him one last time. They were both executed. William and his father survived the war in hiding.

William was liberated in July 1944, in a forest near Niemenczyn, about 12 miles northeast of Vilna. After the war, William spent several weeks in a Displaced Persons camp in Italy in 1945 and then remained in northern Italy for six more years. In 1953, William married Pearl Esterowicz. They immigrated to the United States and settled in California. The couple had three children — Leonard, Ann, and Michael — and four grandchildren. William became a doctor and practiced family medicine. His interview was conducted on January 7, 1996, in West Covina, California.