

RG-50.120 #0197

IDP 1944 1 of 1 255/1-2

PORTNOY, LEA [born Fuchs]

01.01 Born in 1918 in Rafalovka in the Ukraine, district of Sarny. She her 2 sisters and 2 brothers lived with her parents in this small village. Father died when she was 6, mother rented out rooms and traded to support the family. She went to a Polish school and then to high school in Kovel. She described antisemitism in 1933, '34. She returned to Rafalovka and joined Jewish youth groups.

01.22 She married in 1939 into a well-to-do family. In 1939, when Russians came, they confiscated property of the rich and they were left with very little. In 1940 her son was born and had to be circumcised secretly because the communists did not allow it. The Jews feared the Russians who killed many and sent others to Siberia. They did not believe the horror stories told by the refugees from Poland about the Germans. When the front moved, the Russians warned them to escape before the Germans came.

01.31 In 1941 the Germans came. She describes how the Ukrainians used the opportunity to plunder and destroy Jewish property. She escaped to the forest with her child. Upon her return to the village there was already a ghetto.

01.40 She describes life in the ghetto and how the Germans organized the killings of children and adults.

01.49 Describes her escape to the forest.

02.02 Describes her many escapes and shelter given her by Polish peasants who kept her for some time and then sent her on to protect themselves.

02.40 She joined the partisans in the forest, but could not stay there because they did not allow children.

02.51 She escaped in the winter, over the frozen marshes. In 1944, '45, when the Russians took the area, she boarded various trains in the direction of Russia. She spent some time in Kiev, working in the army kitchen and then tried to return to her village.

There should be another tape.