

**RG – 50. 226.0026**

**Interview with Philip Portyansky.**

01.00.17.

I was born in March 15, 1925, in the village Kamenka of Cherkassky district. My father was a laborer. There were many Jews in Kamenka and I began to study in Jewish school. But in a few years our school was closed because the parents from Kamenka did not want to teach their children in a Jewish school, preferring the Ukrainian school. The reason was that there were a lot of technical colleges and institutes conducted with Russian and Ukrainian language of education but none in Yiddish. So thinking about their children, parents understood that to have a good future, it was necessary to finish Ukrainian school.

I finished 9<sup>th</sup> grade of Ukrainian school before the war began.

There was a very beautiful synagogue in Kamenka. Our family was religious and we celebrated all Jewish holidays.

01.13.20.

There were many Jews in Kamenka who escaped from Poland when the Germans entered there. The Polish Jews told us about the cruelty of the Germans and their attitude to the Jews. Also Polish Jews said we all have to escape from Kamenka because we could expect only death from the Germans.

01.13.30.

When the war began, our family prepared to escape but we could not do it because our father who worked in the slaughterhouse got a special task to deliver the live - stock to a special place and he could not escape from Kamenka with us.

01.16.40.

Since the beginning of the war, our village was bombarded by German planes. On August 5, they did the first pogrom and many Jews were killed that day. I hid from the Germans in my friend's house but I could not stay there for a long time because my friend was scared to hide me. The reason was there was a German order for the people who would speak or help Jews; they all would be killed. So I left my friend's house and moved to the village Rebedaevka.

01.26.30.

I came to Rebedaevka where my father's friend lived. I had no idea where my mom and my sister were because when the pogrom began we all were in different places. My father's friend hid me for a few days. In a few days I heard that all people from Kamenka who could not escape during the pogrom were killed.

01.28.00.

I left that house and went toward Dnepropetrovsk. I reached the village Revovka and there I found my mom and sister. We lived in Revovka for a few days and soon my mom and sister were taken to work in the field. I helped them too. We lived in our friend's house and they hid us from the Germans.

01.32.00.

One day the village headman ordered that we had to bring him our documents from Kamenka because he was asked about it by the Germans. We had no choice and we went to Kamenka. There we got registration numbers and we were forced to wear special signs in order that everybody could see we were Jews. It was obvious we could not leave Kamenka now; it was dangerous. As we could not return to Revovka we went to our house in Kamenka. But there already lived another family and we were not allowed to live in our house. Fortunately, my mother's brother was kind to us and he gave shelter to us in his house. We lived with him, working every day for the Germans. There were 268 adults who survived the pogrom and they, like us, worked for the Germans because they forced us.

02.06.05.

There was a commandant's office in Kamenka. Each person from the village, who was old or sick or could not work because of some other reason was killed by the police. As I was not forced to work because I was young, I asked to get some job because I was afraid to stay alone at home.

02.06.50.

One day people from Kamenka including me were taken to work to Jurchikha. We lived and worked there for a long time.

02.18.15.

The Germans forbade us to speak with people from the village, but a few people from the village were not scared by the Germans and they helped us with some food.

02.25.30.

One day, all Jews from Kamenka were taken to the camp that was located on the edge of the village. The place where we lived was ugly. We had neither bedclothes nor soap. There were 3 police in Kamenka and their boss was a good person and he had sympathy for us. He helped us to prepare for the escape from the camp. We lived in the camp probably for two months, from the beginning of November till December. One day my mother, sister and I escaped from the camp and we went to Revovka.

03.00.14.

We left Revovka and we went toward the line of the battlefront. Each of us had his own documents and we hid them in the one village because we were afraid to have documents with Jewish names and preferred to have none of them. We reached Kirovogradski district. For people from the village we had a story that we were from Donbass and we lost all our documents. One woman from the village was kind to us and she gave shelter to us. My mom and sister began to work at the village and soon I began to help them.

03.08.40.

One day, the village headman took my mom to the commandant's office and he said there that my mom was a Jew. But my mom insisted she was Ukrainian. People from the commandant's office believed her to be Ukrainian and she was allowed to leave the commandant's office.

03.12.50.

Soon after that day, my family left the village. We were lucky because our mom was able to get documents for all of us with Ukrainian names.

03.15.20.

One day, we had an accident in one village because there was a battle and together with other people we were taken to the commandant's office. But we were lucky we had Ukrainian documents and the commandant of the town did

not hurt us, but instead we get a warrant for a job in the place where we were from; we had new documents and according to our new documents we were from Donbass.

As Donbass was far away from us and it was cold, we reached the village Potoki and decided to stay there for a while. Some people from the village guessed we were Jews but they said nothing to the police. We lived and worked in Potoki for a few months.

03.20.50.

Many people from Potoki were taken to Germany. In order that I would not be taken to Germany like other people my age I changed the year of my birth from 1925 into 1927.

03.21.20.

In 1942, people from Potoki began to get anti – German leaflets that were given us by the partisans; sometimes I disseminated leaflets.

03.24.00.

One day in 1942, my friend and I were taken by the police but we escaped from them. Then we discovered that if we had not escaped that day we would have been taken to Germany like other people.

03.30.00.

In 1943, October 30, a few Russian soldiers from the secret service entered the village Kamenka. They wanted to draft me but as I looked very young I was not taken to be a soldier. But as I was a good worker, I got a promotion and I began to work as a brigadeleader in the village.

04.02.00.

One day my mom and sister were in the nearest village and there they met their friend who told them that our father was alive and was in the hospital.

04.04.37.

My mother, sister and I returned to Kamenka where we have lived before. There I began to work and soon I entered the Kirovograd technical college; I finished in 1947. As I was a good student, when I finished the college I had a choice to work any place I would want. I decided to live and work in Kirovograd.  
In 1948 I was taken to serve in the Army.

04.05.50.

After serving in the Army I returned to Kamenka. In 1957, I entered the institute and finished in 1963.

In 1952 I got married and I have 2 daughters.