

RG-50.378 #014

Dryzhun, Iosef Fayvelevich

- 1.00 Born May 24, 1925 in village of Gorodnoye in Brest Oblast. Father was shoemaker. Had 2 uncles in America. Two synagogues in village. Had sister and brother. Attended Jewish school and at same time Polish school.
- 1.04 Became carpenter in area which was then pre-war Poland.
- 1.05 When Germans invaded Poland in 1939, he was in Pinsk. Many Jewish refugees from Western Poland arrived in area.
- 1.07 [Interviewers ask Dryzhun to discuss his early youth.]
- 1.28 When Soviets took control of eastern Belorussia in 1939, some store and land owners arrested.

[Break]

- 2.00 Again discusses youth.
- 2.13 When Germans attacked USSR in June 1941 Dryzhun and some friends tried to flee eastward, but were stopped by Soviet guards at what was the old border between the USSR and Poland and turned back.
- 2.15 Germans entered Gorodnoye 8 days after war started. SS troops immediately killed 70 Jewish men. Many hid in woods. Germans left, and Dryzhun returned to village.
- 2.19 In August established ghetto in Gorodnoye. Established Judenrat.
- 2.22 In September 1943 local peasants told ghetto inmates that the Germans had prepared 7 trenches in the forest and that it appeared the Jews were to be killed. The peasants advised the Jews to try to escape from the ghetto.
- 2.23 Dryzhun, together with 3 others, cut barbed wire surrounding ghetto and ran. Hid in woods and later heard shots – the other inmates were being killed. About 60 had escaped. But 40 later captured.
- 2.26 Lived in woods - on potatoes in field, mushrooms. Moved eastward and joined a partisan unit which had a number of Jews.
- 2.28 Found out that his mother and sister had been killed by Germans. Found his brother in the woods.

[Break]

- 3.02 Discusses who were in ghetto in Gorodnoye. Not only Jewish residents of Gorodnoye, but also Jews from surrounding countryside. Judenrat collected valuables on orders from Germans. Members thought they would be spared, but also killed when ghetto liquidated.
- 3.08 Local peasants used to come to ghetto to ask for laborers. They paid with food. Some inmates worked maintaining roads.
- 3.10 When news of impending liquidation of ghetto a rabbi assured people God would save them, said they should pray. Dryzhun says many more could have escaped but 'religion stood in the way'.
- 3.16 "Subbotniki" [a religious sect] members were usually more helpful to ghetto inmates than general local population.
- 3.21 Dryzhun contracted typhus in 1943 while working in area controlled by partisans. Spent 5 months recovering in a house set aside for typhus victims. Minimal care.
- 3.24 Wanted to join partisans before fell ill, but unit would not accept him because he had no weapons.
- 3.25 Taken into army when Soviet forces advanced into Belorussia, fought in the liberation of Pinsk. Later his unit was sent to fight near Riza. Then the unit marched to Warsaw and later on to Germany.
- 3.29 Demobilized in 1945. Goes to Pinsk. Began to work in furniture factory. Studied in technical university.

[Break]

- 4.00 Interviewers ask about life in ghetto. Each person worried first about himself and family members.
- 4.03 Discusses escape from ghetto.
- 4.16 Describes life in partisan unit. When not ill, he helped dig underground living quarters.
- 4.17 Married in 1950. Retired in 1984.

END OF TAPE