

RG-50.378*015

Kustonovich, Sofia Binyaminovna [maiden name: Shapiro]

- 1.00 Born 5 Jan 1916 in the town of Pogost in Slutsk rayon, Bobruysk oblast. Four children. Father was blacksmith, mother a housewife. Her first job was as telephone operator in the postal service.
 - 1.02 Germans came in Pogost a few days after war began. Seized and killed her father and two brothers. Ghetto was established. Sofia, mother and sister managed to leave ghetto and go to Slutsk, where they entered ghetto and stayed about a year and 2 months.
 - 1.04 In August 1942 killing of people in Slutsk ghetto. Sofia and family chosen for work on construction.
 - 1.05 Narrative returns briefly to pre-war life in Pogost. Happy life; relations with neighbors good.
 - 1.07 In Slutsk ghetto, Germans began to kill everyone. Sofia manages to escape [she does not explain how] and returns to Pogost area, where she comes into area where partisans active.
 - 1.08 Meets partisan intelligence agents who report to partisan headquarters, where people know of Sofia's family. She is accepted into partisan unit. Did laundry. Cooked.
 - 1.12 Stayed with partisans until 1944, when area liberated by Soviet troops. She returned to Pogost, married Kostmovich, who was agricultural official.
 - 1.13 Sofia didn't want to stay in Pogost, where no Jews had survived. Family moved to Pinsk, where many of her wartime partisan comrades lived. Husband died in 1974.
 - 1.16 Interviewer returns to questions about Sofia's childhood. Discusses family. Describes Pogost, which she says was essentially a Jewish town. Russian residents could also speak Yiddish. Relations good.
 - 1.24 Discusses family religious life, Jewish holidays.
- [Break]
- 2.00 Discusses pre-war work as telephone operator. 50 telephone numbers connected to switch board.

- 2.04 Discusses work, social life as young telephone operator.
- 2.07 Says no rumors of war in late 1930's
- 2.08 Discusses outbreak of war. Had no idea that war would have such terrible consequences.
- 2.11 Germans arrived on third day after war's outbreak. Men seized forced to dig ditch, then were shot. Rest of people forced into ghetto. Sofia, mother, and family went to Slutsk, 25 km from Pogost.
- 2.19 Discusses Slutsk ghetto. When people worked in ghetto, they received 300 grams of bread per day. Police were residents of local area.
- 2.25 There was a 'Jewish committ' which lived outside the ghetto, but served as an administration for the ghetto, on behalf of the Germans.

[Break]

- 3.00 Discusses life in ghetto. No epidemics. Germans insisted on cleanliness, feared epidemic. Some local peasants helped friends in ghetto.
- 9.25[?] Doesn't know of any resistance in ghetto. No radio. Didn't know about course of war.
- 3.11 Discusses again Aug. 1942 killing of ghetto inmates. Germans and police conducted round-up. She jumped from a truck which was carrying inmates to pace of execution – was not seen by 2 German guards and policeman on truck. Ran and hid. Went to Pogost, then into woods. Entered partisan territory.
- 3.16 Discusses again meeting with partisans and entry into partisan unit. Shows copy of partisan ID card issued when she joined Aug 22 1942.
- 3.22 She worked as cook, milked cows. Washed. Sewed. Then baked bread full-time. She also stood guard. Unit located in Khodyka [phonetic] near Mikashevich [phon].
- 3.29 After area liberated, returns to hometown, Pogost. Aug. 1944.
- 3.30 Marries, moves to Pinsk. Memories in Pogost were too difficult to live with. Thus decides to go to Pinsk.

END OF TAPE

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