

RG-50.378 #018

Kobrina, Genya Moyseyevna

1.00 Born in 1924 in village of Kalishki, Lestyanskiy rayon, Vitebsk oblast. Mainly a Jewish village. Father worked on nearby collective farm. Genya raised by grandmother. Attended Jewish school through 7th grade. In 1937 Jewish schools abolished. Later began studies in Vitebsk Medical Institute. Had brother. Lives in Vitebsk [as of time video tape made].

1.04 Discusses early life, school life, religious holidays.

1.14 Discusses famine of 1933. Her family helped by daughters of a Russian Orthodox clergyman who lived nearby. Discusses more details of prewar life – village, school, entertainment, local market.

[break]

2.06 Describes ‘repressions in 1937, when various local residents accused of being Kulaks.

2.11 Discusses immediate pre-war period. Refugees from Poland began to arrive in area after German attack in 1939. But nobody in village thought war would reach USSR.

2.11 When war started people in village thought it wouldn’t last long, that Red Army would quickly defeat Germans. No evacuation. Father called into army.

2.20 Describes entry of Germans into village in early July 1941. Burned much of village – looted livestock. German troops moved on. Soon ‘punitive’ unit [Karatelniy Otryad] arrived. Citizens tried to evacuate. Genya managed to get away. Many of her family members – grandparents, cousins buried alive. Mother with her brother able to escape. Begin to walk west.

2.26 Get rides on trucks, freight trains. Genya ends up in Cheboksary [east of Gorkiy] where an aunt lived. Along way she had lost track of mother near Smolensk.

2.28 Describes first days in Cheborsary. No money, no documents. Gets job.

[break]

3.02 Hears from mother, who is with partisans near Smolensk. Mother and brother join Genya in Cheborsary.

3.07 Enters agricultural institute in Chebosary.

- 3.10 Able to correspond with father who is in the army.
- 3.12 Hear that father is wounded. Fatehr later arrives in Chebosary.
- 3.14 Family returns to Smoensk area after it is liberated.
- 3.15 Genya enters veterinary institute of Viotebesk.
- 3.17 Interviewers return to first days of German occupations. Genya goes over details. She was helped by German soldier who she thinks might have ordered police not to kill her.
- 3.22 Three or four houses in village were surrounded by barbed wire and turned into a kind of ghetto. People forced to work – clear roads, work on collective farm.

[break]

- 4.00 Discusses attitudes and actions of local Russians and Belorussians.
- 4.02 Some locals brought Genya's family bread on occasion.
- 4.05 Discusses instances of rape, murder – mainly by local polizei.
- 4.10 Some Germans were relatively kind.
- 4.11 Interviewer asks again about liberation by Soviet troops. Evacuated to the east. Train bombed by Germans.
- 4.17 Returns to discussion of life with partisan unit.
- 4.20 Discusses post-war and current feelings about war.

END OF TAPE