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Summary

Lejka Weintrub was born on November 2, 1928 in Romania village Sculiano.

Her parents, mother- Dora and father- Pinhas, were 36 years old when the war started. She had a little brother Abram. They had a big family. Her father was one of 9 children, her mother had three sisters.

Her father was a tailor of winter clothes, her mother was a house wife.

She went to the Romanian school, there were no Jewish schools.

They lived under Romania until 1940. In August of 1940 Soviet Government took over their place, she went to the Russian school.

Her father was a very educated person, he read many book.

Her family followed major Jewish holidays, and went to the synagogue.

Her grandfather was a very religious person.

The majority of people in the village were Moldovan.

When she was a child she had only Jewish friends.

They lived in the Jewish part of the village in their own house. They had a room for a grandfather, they had two rooms and a living room.

The relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish people overall wase good.

In August 1940 she remembered that Romanian army was running away, solders were jumping into the river, they told people that they be back next year. The Soviet army came with parades and tanks. She remembered the celebratory ceremony when she became a pioneer. For a while, there were no major changes; all synagogs remained opened.

Her uncle had access to the information about situation in Europe and Hitler coming to power.

In Romania Pro- fascist party came to power in 1936.

Lejka remembered that the day before the war was announced she with other children was watching young people dancing in the park and a young man singing beautiful Russian song. Next day early morning around 4:00 a.m. people gathered on the street as they heard about the war. Their houses were right at the border with Romania. Her mother's sister came with a big cart and asked her parents to move away with them. Her father said, that he was not going to leave his new house, that the war will be over soon. One day the bullet from Romania flew across their home, they called the border patrol, he assured them that everything will be all right, they didn't have to move anywhere. However, in about one hour they saw German troops marching through their village. Soon after Jews were ordered to put yellow stars on their homes. Her parents put the star on the house, but they all went into the deep dark, cold basement to hide. Meanwhile, Jewish homes were robbed by local people. They stayed in the basement for about two weeks. Their father brought food scrums from the adjoined store. One night they herd bombs falling right next to their house. Their village was bombed both by Germans and Russians. One day German soldiers entered their basement and other homes and pushed everybody out and convoyed people across the bridge. Everybody, Jews and Moldovan people were ordered to march in a column across the bridge. After a short period, they were

told to stop; the Germans started separating Jews from Moldavians. They ordered Jews to take clothes off, they were grabbing babies, people were screaming, it was horrific. Her father suggested to run away to the nearby woods. About 16 people were able to run away. Those who couldn't run were all killed, or pushed alive into ditches. The killings were primarily done by Germans. Some Moldavians saw them running, but didn't say a word. When they reached the woods they walked back to their village and they stayed in a small abundant house. She didn't remember what they ate. They stayed there for 8 days and one day German soldiers came to the house, and pushed them out and convoyed them through the streets. Lejka remembered that dead bodies were all over their village, and among them their grandfather. The whole group was marched to Romanian side to the gendarmerie. There they saw dead bodies of Jewish people, they knew that they will be killed. However, one man who had gold and decided to give to the German guards and their fortune changed, they were not killed, instead they were convoyed to the Romanian town - Iasi (Yassy). In Iasi they were combined with another group of Jews.

More than thousand people was marched from Romania to Ukraine, without food or water. When they passed the place where the first group was murdered they felt that the earth was breathing. It was a very hot July of 1941. When a little girl ran to the puddle, she was shot, and her mother bitten to death. They were ordered to run for 16 kilometers. Those who couldn't run, were shot. When they reached Iasi they were convoyed through the streets. Romanians saw them, but nobody could help them, people had no power. They were ordered to stop inside Romanian gendarmerie. They saw a huge pile of corpses, all naked, next was a pile of clothes. During the night they were told to go to the courtyard and line along the wall. They waited to be killed, but another officer changed the order, and they were told to go back inside the barracks. From that place they were convoyed to the train station and pushed into the boxcars. It was called the "death train".

People were dying from first and hunger. At one of the stops some people were pushed out and later shot. Lejka and her family reached Judju, a small town near Bucharest. They were ordered to go to barracks. Everyday they were convoyed to work in the fields, everybody; elderly, little children. They stayed there until October- November 1941. Then they were loaded into the boxcars by Romanians, they were told that they will be sent home, but the train stopped in the town of Soroki -Moldavia, and people were ordered to get off the train. The group was convoyed into the woods. She remembers it was near the river, at night the rain came down. People tried to start fires, but Germans were killing people right there. People were shot, beaten. After a couple of days the whole group was ordered to go across the bridge to the Ukrainian side. The German soldiers stood on the bridge and were grabbing everything they wanted: rings, earrings, watches. Lejka had earrings, but she was so little and dirty, the soldiers didn't take them. They were marched from Soroki towards Ukraine during cold months. Her little brother's feet were getting cold, then infected and he couldn't walk. And their father carried him. During the night time they were pushed into old stables. That was a death march, people were doing and many were shot on the way. They were marched to the village Obodovka, Vinitskay county. They couldn't walk anymore. They were left to die in the old barn without roof, windows, just old walls. They were lying on the floor waiting to die. At night

Ukrainian policemen came and beat people for no reason. Her father still could walk, but her brother had high fever, he couldn't move. He was crying all the time. One night her father went to the nearby house and asked them for some food in exchange for work. She saw her little brother dying, she saw his body falling apart. Her father died one month after her brother. Lejka's legs couldn't move, she could only crawl. People who were able to move tried to move corpses outside the barn. They survived the winter, but in the Spring her mother died. Lejka was all alone. She knew she was going to die like her family anyway, so one night she crawled towards the house, the dog started barking, the people came out and brought her home.

She was covered with lice, dirt, infection.

The family took great care of her. The mother and children were very kind to her. They knew she was Jewish. The mother cut her hair, dressed her in their daughter's clothes, gave her food. Lejka started feeling much much better, she was able to walk outside. One day the boy from the neighbor's house called her - jedovka - a Jew. She told the family and the older brother - Volodya, took care of the situation the family told their neighbors that she was their relative. However, the policemen who lived next door started watching her. She was helping the family in the fields, she went to the church and the market with the family. Lejka was helping everywhere. She was very little, she looked like she was five years old. The family was able to hide her behind the bags with grain. One night when the Germans came, the children hid her inside the bed between mattresses.

They gave Germans alcohol, they got drunk and left.

The husband and the son in the family were connected to the partisans. One day they learned that partisans were transporting Jewish orphans to a safe place and the family decided that Lejka should go. It was a very hard decision, the family loved her dearly. They made special clothes to her, a big bag of food. A man came with a wagon and took her to Balta.

Lejka remembered, that she was placed in the small house with other Jewish children. They had school, two Jewish teachers. A little Jewish girl from Chernivtsi became her friend. That girl Ester. The orphanage was protected by Red Cross or Americans, they didn't know. However, the Germans used to come with dogs and raped older girls.

One day a woman, Mrs. Bendersky, and a man came to the orphanage, they brought beautiful clothes for the girls. Lejka was able to speak with them in Romanian language. They picked several children, including her and transported them to Romania. Children were placed in a former senior home.

Romanian Jews visited them many times, they were trying to find the children from their families. Lejka remembered one woman who knew family that used to be her neighbors in Sculiano. She invited Lejka to live with her, but she felt that children in the orphanage were her family.

When the front came close, all children were evacuated to Bucharest in the open trucks. They were not starving anymore. One group was left in a small town on the way, Leila was brought to Bucharest orphanage. On Rosh Hashanah Lejka and her friend went to the synagog and one woman invited her to her home. She and her husband didn't have children and she took great care of her, bought her clothes, gave her good food, they took her to the countryside. She told her that she wanted to adopt her, but Lejka, remembered her parents, she didn't want to become adopted.

The orphanage was preparing for Russian, the Soviet army was very close, they heard the sounds of the battles. The administration brought red fabrics and children got red tires and red flags.

Lejka remembered very well that all the people, including those who gave bread to the German solders were on the streets greeting the Soviet army and solders who came on the tanks. Lejka remembered that she felt very proud to see "her" people.

The Russian embassy representatives came to their orphanage and ordered to moved children to a much bigger and better place. She remembered beautiful building with huge classes, boys separate from girls; really good food. They were offered to take different classes: French, sewing class. They felt that "their people" will take care of them, that they belong to the Soviet Union. However, this situation lasted just for a few months. One day children were told that they have to go back to Russia. They received big suitcases, new coats, new dresses. One man from the Embassy wanted to adopt one of the girls, but she refused. They were such great friends, they didn't want to be separated.

The children were transported in a beautiful train, they had food, very comfortable. They were brought to Donbas region town- Konstantinovka. They were taken to the existing orphanage for the Ukrainian children. They were the only Jewish children.

All their possessions were taken away, their hair was cut short, they received uniforms, and heavy jackets like other children.

This period was very bad, they had very little food, they had to steal carrots, because they were hungry all the time. Older girls had to go to the technical school and they lived separately. She remembered two sisters and a brother- Schneider from Chernovits, older sister was in a technical school. One day their older brother, who survived the camps came and took them home. She remembered that everybody was crying. One of their teachers was Jewish Riva Moiseevna, and children asked her to help them go back home. Jewish children were. It treated rarely, the director was a big anti-Semite, she called them names, made them do very hard work, children were thinking of the ways to get out. They learned that the Rabbi in Chernovits has a small orphanage for Jewish kids. They bagged administration to allow them to go to Chernovits, and finally a small group of kids including Lejka got a permission. Some children just ran away and joined them on the train. The Jewish teacher supervised them .

They arrived to Chernovits on May First. They heard music, it was a holiday.

Although their teacher left them and forgot to give them their papers, they found the Rabbi's house.

The children were placed in an old house with broken windows, but they were happy.

Lejka recognized the Rabbi, he was from her village, and he remembered her grandfather and her father. He escaped camps, he was beaten to death, punched with guns, but he survived- it was a miracle. His name was Sculianskiy. Rabbi's wife took her into her home.

Lejka wrote many letters to her village, trying to find out whether anybody survived. After the war her aunt wrote back she came from evacuation. She was so happy to find Lejka, that she and her son took a train without tickets, they had no money, in old clothes, without shoes to see her and take her back home.

In 1947 the Rabbi with all orphans immigrated to Israel.

Lejka lived with her family, she started working. Then her older cousin got married And she moved with her family. Lejka became a teacher in daycare. In 1953 Lejka married a young man who came back from evacuation with his family.

Lejka remembered that her old house and all Jewish streets were destroyed. Lejka was the only one who survived the camp.

She remembered that some people were accused of cooperation with Germans. However, many locals who cooperated with Germans remained in the village.

After the war one Romanian officer saved one Jewish woman.

There is an association of people from Sculiano, they gather every year in Israel in remembrance of the massacre of 1941.

After the war there were about 80 Jewish families. In 1956 their region was reorganized, and many families moved to other towns.

Lejka and her husband had very respectable jobs, people treated them nicely, therefore, they didn't want to tell anybody, that they were planning to immigrate to Israel. Lejka and her husband emigrated to Israel in 1990, her daughter immigrated to Australia and then invited them and they moved to Australia in 1993. They miss Israel. They felt at home in Israel.

Lejka still suffers from nightmares, severe chronic arthritis. Her daughter has a degree in Russian and was a head teacher in high school. In Australia she went to school and got degree in elementary education. Her granddaughter is studying to become an optometrist, her grandson is in the eighth grade.

Lejka and her husband belong to the "Russian" group. It was very difficult for her to give the interview, she can't stop thinking about everybody she lost during the war.

Lejka feels, that her parents prayers helped her to survive; people always loved her and helped her. It was her faith.

After the war Lejka wrote many letters to the village New Obodovka and the regional administration trying to find the family that saved her life. After many years, she received a

letter from a relative of the family. She remembered that it was June, 1986. Then she found Volody, the older son of the couple, he wrote to her that the parents passed away and that he and his sister live in Vinnitsa and invited her to come.

Lejka went with her husband to Vinnitsa, and although she hasn't seen Volody in more than 40 years, she recognized him immediately. Volodya was very sick, he could hardly walk, but he with his wife came to the train station. They brought them home, all his family was there, they met her as her own family. Then Lejka went to Obodovka, she wanted to find place where her family; mother, father and a little brother and thousands of Jewish people died, or rather were murdered by starvation, cold and diseases. There was no monument or any mark in the area.

Lejka shows pictures.