

ŠEIBOKIENĖ, Elena
Lithuania Documentation Project
Lithuanian
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Tape 1

In this interview E. Šeibokienė, born in 1925, talks about the Jews in Vitiškės, saying they were mostly shopkeepers; that they were entrepreneurial and good people. When the war started E. Šeibokienė had been living with her uncle Adomas **Ūselis (Uselis)** – who was a retired policeman and who lived on a substantial disability pension and had a lot of land – and his wife in Kirveliškės. She recounts and vividly describes the screaming she heard when the Jews were being shot. She says that her uncle – who had not taken part in any Lithuanian partisan activities and would just sit around and do nothing – voluntarily went to Žasliai and enrolled to shoot the Jews. She recounts him bringing home a little suitcase with clothes in it – she describes the clothes in detail – and giving her a ring with a monogram, which, she thinks, used to belong to a Jewish girl. Although E. Šeibokienė claims she doesn't know if her uncle became rich from taking part in the shootings, she mentions that – after he fled to Australia – he led a comfortable life, since he sent her a picture of himself in front of a two-storied house. She also recounts an incident that she had only heard about: how a Jew with a mouth full of golden teeth, bit an arm of a perpetrator, who was trying to tear out his. At the end of the interview, the camera is taken outside, where a signboard of an alcohol shop is shown with a Jewish name on it. E. Šeibokienė gives the signboard to the filming crew.

[01] 00: 20: 10 - [01] 00: 41: 02
00:00:21 – 00:00:43

[While the title card is being filmed, E. Šeibokienė recounts how she used to work as a child.]

[01] 00: 41: 02 - [01] 05: 14:09
00:00:43 -00:05:27

She presents herself, saying that she was born in Vidiškės (*Ignalina district*) in 1925; she lists all the last names she has had: **Ūselytė (Uselytė)** (maiden name), **Gricienė** (her husband died in the army), and now – **Šeibokienė**. She says she had lived with her first husband, who was rich, for half a year. Her father worked as a laborer, later he fixed roofs; her mother used to run errands for the Jews. She remembers how her mother would bring home matzos, and how tasty they were. She tells about her brothers and sisters, their professions: a teacher, a shoemaker, an inspector, a laborer. She says that she went to school, but did not finish her fourth grade; that she lived in Mikailiškiai (*Radviliškis district*), where her first husband was from, for three years; that her second husband, Šeibokas, was also from Vidiškiai; that she used to live with her uncle when

the war started, but her parents took her back when the uncle fled. She recounts there being a lot of Jews in Vidiškės; she says she could still count them, but she cannot remember their names; she says that they were mostly shopkeepers; that they were wealthy; that they had land and cows; that they got on well with the Lithuanians; that they were good people; that if somebody could not pay them back immediately, they agreed to wait; that they were entrepreneurial. She remembers how she would bring water to some Jews – Dovydas was one of them – on her way to school; that she went to school with Jewish children; that the Jews would not bring books to school on Saturdays – only notebooks.

[01] 05: 14:09 - [01] 11:00:11
00:05:27 - 00:11:28

She says that she was already at her uncle's when the war started; that when the Jews were being shot, the "animals would go astray from their screaming"; that the Jews would sit in their dug-outs, that she was also told to go hide, but she would walk around freely. She says she cannot remember when the shootings took place, but claims that it was at the same time as everywhere else; that she doesn't know where they took place. She mentions having heard that bodies were found in Duksynos forest (*close to Vidiškės*). She recounts having heard the screams even though the Žasliai village, where they were shot, was far away; remembers how her uncle was not with them, but how he came back "having lost his human face". She explains that they lived in Kirveliškės (*Vidiškės' ward*); that her uncle had bought a lot of land with a little house on it; that he had moved there when he started working for the police; that, when his health deteriorated, he started receiving a disability pension of 180 Litas, which at that time was a lot. When asked why, in her opinion, he went to shoot the Jews, she answers that she doesn't know, but „maybe he wanted to drink some blood. “ She recounts her father telling her that her uncle used to be a good person that he changed when he got rich. She says that she doesn't know if her uncle got rich because of his participation in the shootings; that he would not bring anything home, except for one little suitcase – with bathrobes, dresses and a blouse – for her. When asked to show any of the items, she explains that nothing is left. She recounts her uncle giving her his ring and a ring with a monogram on it, from a Jewish girl. [The interviewer calls for a break; when the camera resumes, E. Šeibokienė talks about her brothers and sisters and their birth dates.]

[01] 11:00:11 - [01] 19:06:13
00:11:28 – 00:19:53

She says that at her uncle's home, there was a man hired to performed all the manly tasks, while the womanly tasks were performed by her and her aunt. She claims she doesn't not know how long the shootings lasted, but that the screaming could be heard for two days. She recounts seeing Jews with yellow stars attached on her way to the church in Žasliai. She remembers going to visit the uncle in his apartment in Žasliai, but he didn't want to talk to them. She says that her uncle's name was **Adomas Ūselis (Uselis)**; that she doesn't know the exact year of his birth, but that he left for the army the year she was born, so he could be 19 or 20 the (in 1925). She claims

that her uncle had a “Brown” pistol even before the war; that she doesn’t know if her uncle was wearing a uniform when shooting, but guesses he could have changed at his concubines, because he was wearing civilian clothes when he would come back home. She says that when he fled, her uncle fled alone and left her aunt all alone; that later he sent her, E. Šeibokienė, a photograph of a two-storied house and his new Lithuanian wife next to it. When asked if he changed after the shootings, she says that he did. She remembers him having a moustache [*imitates the moustache*], listening to the radio all the time. When asked if he was a cruel man, she says that he was quite a good person, just didn’t stay home too often. She recounts how he came back from the shootings and said, “I shot 400, and I will need only one bullet”; how he told them that one Jew asked him why he did what he did to them – so he shot him first; how her aunt would stay silent, as she was afraid to say anything. She says that her uncle would not give explanations of why he was shooting the Jews; that she would not see him drunk at home. She remembers how he would shoot at the ceiling at home; how she was afraid. She says she cannot understand why he went to shoot the Jews, since he had quite a large disability pension; that maybe his friends drew him into it, but that “he didn’t have to go if he didn’t want to.”

[01] 19:06:13 - [01] 29:01:10
00:19:53 – 00:30:14

When asked about the beginning of the war, she starts explaining that she got married at the start of the war, in 1942; that she moved to live in Mikailiškės; that her husband went into hiding; that she was farid of the Germans... As the interviewer reminds her that the war started in 1941 and asks if her uncle took part in the partisan movement, she says that her uncle did not take part in anything, that he stayed home with his disability. She claims that he went to Žasliai on his own initiative, that nobody came to take him. When asked whether the uncle got rich from the shootings, she explainsd once again that he did not bring anything home except for that little suitcase – and she lists and describes the contents once again; she talks about the rings he gave her; she claims that her uncle did not say it was a Jewish ring, that he only said it was “from a student“, but, according to her, he could not have gotten it from anywhere else but the Jews. She remembers how he sent her a package of cloth and shoes from Australia. She says she doesn’t know if he earned the moeny in Australia, or bought the two-storied house with what he stole from the Jews. She says that after the shooting, her uncle did not come back to Kirveliškės; that he fled to Australia after the war ended, where he eventually died. She remembers him changing his address once in Australia, and she suspects that he did it because he was persecuted; she says that she had heard from her relatives that he had changed his name, but she did not receive a letter with his new name. She says that he lived in Žasliai until the end of the war; that armed men searched for him; that he would run and hide in the rye.

[01] 29:01:10 - [01] 32:38:05
00:30:14 - 00:33:59

She recounts a Jew, **Borakas (Burakas)** – she is not sure whether it is his first or last name, who lived in Vidiškės and owned a shop; she recounts all of his teeth being made of gold. Mentions other names of the Jews who lived in Vidiškės: **Šimkas, Dovydas, Juoselis, Kivelis**. She claims that all Jews had golden teeth. She remembers hearing that Borakas bit the arm of Rinkevičius, who wanted to tear out his teeth – she thinks it may have taken place in 1942; that then **Rinkevičius** shot Borakas, and that it happened before the other shootings; that Borakas was buried outside of Vidiškės. She claims that she had heard Rinkevičius complaining that his arm wouldn't heal; that Rinkevičius and her uncle were relatives [she digresses; watches her stepson walk by; yawns]; that she doesn't who else shot the Jews in Vidiškės.

[01] 32:38:05 - [01]: 35:42:09
00:33:59 - 00:37:10

[The setting changes to outside; E. Šeibokienė is seen getting water from the well; the camera moves around her yard and stops at a signboard; the interviewer asks E. Šeibokienė to give him the signboard and she agrees; the signboard says "Vodka and beer shop. M. Goldfainas." When asked where A. Goldfainas used to live, E. Šeibokienė says she doesn't know.]