

PAUKŠTIENĖ, Viktorija
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In this interview Viktorija **Gelumbiauskaitė**-Paukštienė, born in 1931 in Žalioji farmstead—eight kilometers away from Butrimonys town—shares her memories about her family’s suffering incurred for harboring Jews. She explains that her parents had been hiding a Jewish family for a few months, when they were denounced by her father’s brother. She describes in detail how, as the (SA) hit men came to arrest the Jews, the Jews returned fire; how her parents swore to not having known that Jews were hiding in their bathhouse, but one of the Jews denounced them. She explains that her father, his brother and her grandfather’s brother were executed, while her mother was deported to a camp in Radviliškis, together with her five children; that they were to be executed as well, but the plans changed at the last minute and they remained alive. The interviewee expresses regret that her parents risked their and their children’s lives to rescue Jewish lives.

[01] 00:33:13 - [01] 02:48:16

00:00:27 – 00:02:48

Q: There. So now, Madam, please, tell me your name and your surname. Where were you born? Where did you live with your family?

A: Can I say now?

Q: Yes.

A: First what, how many—tell you my surname?

Q: Tell me your name and surname.

A: So, I am Viktė (Viktorija) **Gelumbiauskaitė**. My surname after [my marriage to] my husband - Paukštienė. I was born in Žalioji farmstead, on the 5th of September in 1931. Butrimonys post office, Alytus district. I lived in Žalioji until [19]51.

Q: And was it far to Butrimonys from where you were?

A: Eight kilometers. Well, what else?

Q: What did your family do? Tell me a little about your family.

A: My parents had a farm. 63 hectares. I had a brother too. He worked – managed the household. [They] had helpers. In [nineteen] fifty—forty eight—oh, can I record my sisters too? My eldest sister is Janina **Gelumbiauskaitė**. Her surname after [her marriage to] her husband is **Vinevičienė**. She is 75. Then, Marytė **Gelumbiauskaitė** got married to a Kaminskas. Stasė **Gelumbiauskaitė** married a **Surgontas**. My brother, Zenonas **Gelumbiauskas**, was born in [19]41. He lives in Vilnius.

[01] 02:48:17 - [01] 04:33:14

00:02:49 – 00:04:37

Q: Well, and what were your parents names?

A: My father – Petras **Gelumbiauskas**.

Q: What year was your father born in?

A: He would have turned a hundred this year. I don't remember what year.

Q: And your mother?

A: My mother as well. Do you need her maiden name? She was **Franė Šedevičiūtė**.

Q: Gelumbiauskienė.

A: She got married to Petras **Gelumbiauskas**.

Q: Mrs. Viktė, so tell me now; how—how did the saving—the rescuing—of the Jews take place.

A: Petras had a brother. Bronius **Gelumbiauskas** was [his name]. And they died together.

Q: How did they die? What did they die for?

A: Do you need [to know about] their father? Raimundas **Gelumbiauskas**. Don't you need [to know about] their father?

Q: Maybe not. Tell me how they died.

A: We were living—men came at night. There was a lot of snow. The woman was pregnant. And they said: “We will not leave from here. If you don't let us in, they [we] will pull a grenade”. And my parents let them in for a short while. But they stayed for a very long time, because the woman was pregnant. The snow, the poor roads, and she was so—and they did not move on. They were allowed to stay for a short while. They settled in. The neighbors started talking that somebody was hiding. My father asked them to leave on Saturday. But the Jewish man sat down and said: “We will not leave. We will pull a grenade and everything will go in the air. And you and your children will also die. We are done for anyway”.

[01] 04:33:15 - [01] 06:33:14

00:04:38 – 00:06:42

Q: So they had a grenade?

A: They had weapons, of course.

Q: What kind of weapons did they have?

A: Well, they had pistols. They had plenty of grenades. On Saturday my father had knelt down and begged them. And it all happened on Sunday. Well, had they left, everything would have been fine. But they did not leave. [He] said: "Later".

Q: How many of them were there—of the Jews?

A: What?

Q: How many Jews were there?

A: Eight.

Q: Did you know their names, surnames?

A: I know some of them. The ones, who had a baby—**Cilè** and **Abraša (Abraham)**. They had a baby—she gave birth to a baby at our home.

Q: **Cilè** and **Abraša** were a husband and a wife?

A: Yes.

Q: What was their surname?

A: I can't remember it. And **Cilè** had a brother, **Zelka**. He—from—his foot was shot. Three meters to the forest. He would have fled. Well, his wife was this—her sister had come from Klaipėda. [Her] brother was **Borka**. And the sister. They had arrived—these Jews were from Stakliškės—they had come to Stakliškės, and then the war started. And they could not return to Klaipėda. I know that there was a brother, **Borka**, and a sister. I cannot remember the sister's surname. **Zelka**—I cannot remember **Zelka** wife's name either. I know only **Riva**—and **Abraša**, who had a baby. **Jankelis Lipka** from Butrimonys had been staying with us before. **Jankelis Lipka**. Then he joined them. He was wounded. This one was from Butrimonys. His brother is in Israel and has visited me. **Riva** knows [him]. Maybe he is not alive anymore.

[01] 06:33:15 - [01] 08:36:13

00:06:43 – 00:08:50

Q: Mrs. Viktė, so tell me now; did those people from Stakliškės and from Butrimonys arrive all together? Or did they come first, the ones from—

A: **Lipka**, who was from Butrimonys, had stayed with us for half a year. And then, when this group arrived, he joined them. They stayed at the house, and would also go to the bathhouse. And the one, who gave birth to an infant – **Abraša** was with her all the time. **Cilè** and **Abraša** were at the house, and the others would come too—there was a Russian

oven, and they would hide on top of the oven. And when the bathhouse had to be heated, or some people [came], they would leave for the bathhouse. And they had arms.

Q: Did **Lipka** also have a gun?

A: Well, he probably got it from them later.

Q: And when did **Lipka** come to you?

A: **Lipka** came to us in the fall. And the war started around the 23rd of April. **Lipka** was with us for a long time.

Q: So **Lipka** came in the fall.

A: In the fall.

Q: Of what year? In what year?

A: Well, the same year probably. The same year, because—oh, in the fall, so he [was here for] the New Years. [19]42 probably.

Q: So hold on, when did the war start?

A: [19]41.

Q: [19]41.

A: Yes.

Q: So in [19]41 the Jews of Butrimonys were executed.

A: Well, yeah, the Jews were shot in [19]41.

Q: Yes. They were shot in [19]41, right? So—

A: And he, **Lipka**, came to us in [19]42.

Q: In the fall of [19]42?

A: In the fall.

Q: So he, **Lipka**, spent a year somewhere else, right?

A: Well, he was somewhere else. He was [staying] with a **Rutkauskienė**. She had given away her belongings, and she left for Poland. He would have survived. But when he met that group, and they started shooting, and hit a—what do you call them: under the Russians they were called “stribai“(Soviet (SA) hit men), and what were they called

under the Germans?

[01] 08:36:14 - [01] 10:43:02

00:08:51 – 00:11:02

Q: Well, what did you call them?

A: Not security forces, but—I know that under the Russians they were called “sribai“.

Q: People called them “sribai“, yes. And what about those, who [worked] for the Germans?

A: And those, who [worked] for the Germans—those, who worked, what were they called? I forgot. What was it? Maybe you remember?

Q: Well, people called them different names. Wait a minute. Let’s have a break. Aha.

[New cut.]

A: They were shooting there. They were sitting in a horse-drawn cart. They started—we saw the bathhouse burning. And the shooting. And so they were fighting there. When they were finished with the Jews, they came to the yard in another horse-drawn cart. Bronius **Gelumbiauskas** was visiting a neighbor. He saw the bathhouse burning and something—my father did not speak Lithuanian. He said: “I am going there.” Well, to set things straight. And [they] asked: “Who is the landlord?” He said: “I am“. So **Stočkus** hit my father with the bottom of his shoe. And he tore off his entire face. I remember we were watching through the window. And my father stood there—there was a harrow, used for working the land [lying there], so they started kicking him on its nails. Well, and then they were ordered to get ready. They took the child – found it in the basement. They took the bundled child, my father, father’s brother and the grandfather, Jonas **Gelumbiauskas**, who was 99 years old. He was my father’s—my father’s—he was the brother of my father’s father. And he was taken, they were all taken away.

[01] 10:43:03 - [01] 11:58:01

00:11:03 – 00:12:20

Q: Tell me, how did that child end up in the basement?

A: How did the child end up [there]? My mother had a half year old child – and there was an infant. My mother could not—

Q: And the infant belonged to the Jews, right?

A: Yes. And we were all like this [*shows that they were small children*]. There was a maid. And she was asked to lie down in bed with that child. The maid did not lie down. And the child was different [in age]. Had they been twins—but one was half a year old, so older. And the other one was an infant. I remember that they put it—there was a Russian oven—they put it under the oven and covered it with fire-wood. The child started screaming. Not good: if they come in and the child is screaming. Then they decided to take it to the basement. It was put on [a pile of] potatoes. Wrapped in furs. And the basement was low

– then a garden and a forest. [They] said: “If they find him, we will say that the Jews were passing by and left it.” But the basement was not locked. And they came in. First they sent a servant with a pistol. He said: “There is someone crying there“. And so they found the child. He could not have told them that there was nobody there.

[01] 11:58:02 - [01] 13:59:07

00:12:21 – 00:14:26

Q: What did they do to the child?

A: Well, the child was brought to the yard—it was wrapped in furs—and put on a horse-drawn cart. They took the child, [my] father, [my] father’s brother, Bronius **Gelumbiauskas**, and the 99-year old grandfather. They were taken away, and it was over. The next day my mother went over. They were all being put on a truck. She asked: “Where are you taking them?” “We’re taking them to Alytus.” She didn’t see where they put the Jews. **Zelka’s** wounded wife was there from Klaipėda, and also her sister – from Klaipėda as well. But **Lipka** escaped. They did not take **Lipka**. His arm was hit, but he escaped. Through the bushes, he escaped to the [woman], with whom he had stayed before. She went [*to the police? Germans?*] and said: “A Jew, who escaped from **Gelumbiauskas’** family, is at my home.” And she denounced him. She knew that he had—he had said that he had some box with his father’s gold and everything. So [they] told him “We will treat you and then will let you go. Tell us, where your riches are.” So he responded in Russian: "Vragu nikogda nidam" (RUSSIAN:“The enemy never gives up“). So he was shot [right away], and the back of his head came off. It [took place] in the town of Butrimonys. He had gangrene. He needed help. And the others had been taken with [my] father. [My] father lived for another three years—three months that is. They were executed in July, on the 20th of July.

Q: Which year?

A: Well, they were executed the same year that they were arrested. They were arrested in April, and executed on the 20th of July.

Q: So what year was it?

A: [19]43.

[01] 13:59:08 - [01] 16:00:11

00:14:27 – 00:16:33

Q: So **Lipka** came to you in the fall of [19]42?

A: Yes.

Q: He had been somewhere else.

A: Yes.

Q: He came in [19]42. Now look—and when did those Jews from Stakliškės come?

A: Well, they came somewhere around spring.

Q: Around spring.

A: In April—so they came in March. I don't remember which day in March they arrived. They stayed for a long time. And on the 23rd of April, the war began.

Q: Tell me, how did the war start? What did you see that day?

A: Well, what did we see? They were shooting; the bathhouse was on fire, flames. We could not go there. The bathhouse was half a kilometer away from our home. We only saw it through the window. Then they came to with guns, looking for men. Looking for Jews. They looked everywhere. Everywhere. They looked everywhere.

Q: Who were those, who were looking for the Jews—the ones, who came to your home?

A: Well, we discussed it earlier. Who were they? Policemen – or what did people call them?

Q: Were they dressed in civilian clothes or uniforms? What were they wearing?

A: Well, you know, some were dressed in civilian clothes, others in uniform. There were both kinds [among them].

Q: And the ones, who were dressed in civilian clothes — did they, have armbands or some other signs?

A: They were hired. I cannot remember that. You know, I was nine; it was so terrible. It's hard to remember anything. My little brother was crying, my mother was crying too. There was no—well, they were arrested and taken away. Everything was over. And the next day my mother went there. They were put on a truck and taken to Alytus.

Q: And where did your mother go?

A: To Butrimonys. And they were being seated [in the truck] at that particular moment. The chief of the rural district was seating them [in the truck]. He said: "He will be shot in three hours". And my uncle had a towel wrapped around [*shows that it was wrapped around his head*]. He had been injured here [*points to her cheek*]. And they remained there until the 20th [of July]. And the Jews—they did not see those Jews anymore.

[01] 16:00:12 - [01] 17:52:06

00:16:34 – 00:18:29

Q: So that means they were putting only—only your family members were being seated [in the truck]?

A: Yes. My mother saw that [her] husband and [his brother] were seated. And the uncle—the grandfather—was seated too. But she did not see the Jews. The Jews had been taken somewhere else. I don't know, where those Jews were taken – probably also to Alytus.

Q: Well, and when the fight was taking place—did you see how they were surrounded? Did you see from your house—how much you could see—how they were surrounded? Did they try to escape? How did everything happen?

A: I told you: when they approached, stopped the horse-drawn carriage and started shooting, the Jews started shooting back. They stopped the cart fearlessly and surrounded the bathhouse. The Jews saw that: “We are surrounded already“. Then they started throwing grenades and shooting back. They tore the door down and got onto the cart. And they fled. If not for the wide river, they would have escaped. They would have crossed the river –and there was a forest [beyond it]. They would have escaped. But the horses didn't want to wade into the wide river.

Q: And did you see how they tried to escape?

A: We did not see from our home. We did not see from our home. The bathhouse stood half a kilometer inside the forest.

Q: So you could not see the bathhouse from your house?

A: No, no, no. There were stables, then a barn, and then – a forest. It was half a kilometer [away]. It was not locked. That's how my parents defended themselves: “We did not harbor them. The [bath]house was not locked, and they got into it and lived there by themselves.” But **Zelka's** wife, who was wounded, said: “They hid us.” And she pointed at my father: “Petras **Gelumbiauskas** hid us and gave us a gun.”

[01] 17:52:07 - [01] 20:11:19

00:18:30 – 00:20:54

Q: So why is it that she pointed at your father?

A: Well, she pointed. She [was] told: “We will treat you and let you go.” So she pointed at my father: “There, Petras **Gelumbiauskas** hid us and gave us the pistol.” I remember that my father did have a pistol under Smetona. And so he gave his pistol away. And she gave him in. My father was beaten hard for giving the pistol. My father did not confess. They had said: “We did not harbor them – they came in on their own.” And here she said that they had hidden them. I remember, there was a heater there, and they would hide there through the night. Eight people. Just think about it! There were announcements: “Those, who hide Jews, will be treated as Jews themselves.” Where was their mind?! She had so many children. Five children! Uncle Bronislovas had no children, he lived with his wife. And my father had five children. But they had to let the Jews in, hide them. Nobody even said thank you.

Q: Well, and what about now – has anybody thanked you for—

- A: Nobody has said thank you. Nobody, nowhere, nobody. Nothing. I just visit Riva sometimes and we argue – that's it.
- Q: What do you argue about?
- A: Well, I say: "Why does everyone receive medals, all—something, and you – nothing?" "But you have written a book," I say. "Why did you write the book? Why did you write that book?"
- Q: All this is described in that book. There is a picture of your father too – everything is in there.
- A: Yes. I ask why. Adamkus (former president of Lithuania) was giving honors recently; he gave a medal to—and Šleževičius' (former prime minister of Lithuania) mother was also harboring. And this—Kipras Petrauskas (a famous Lithuanian opera singer) also hid two Jewish girls. I say that everybody was officially thanked and received everything, so why not? So Riva—so when I go to argue with Riva sometimes, [she says]: "Daj, rękę pocatvuje" (POLISH: "give me, I will kiss your hand"). I respond: "Aidz z tvoją ręką" (POLISH: "get lost with your hand"). So we would argue with her. No gratitude. But how stupid those people were! They had land and lived peacefully – and it was gone. Why did they have to let them in?

[01] 20:11:20 - [01] 22:51:18

00:20:55 – 00:23:41

- Q: Well, so in your opinion, why did they let the Jews stay?
- A: Well, they felt sorry for them! The woman was pregnant, could not walk – there was a lot of snow. And they said that it was just for a week; that somebody was sick. So they would stay temporarily – just a week. They stayed long – eleven weeks or so. People started talking that "**Gelumbiauskas** is hiding Jews".
- Q: And how did people find out that you were hiding Jews?
- A: Well, they noticed. We had five servants. When strangers or neighbors would come around, they would hide. Others started observing. They saw them walking to the bathhouse. They would go to the bathhouse to fetch water for the food. There was a path [in] the snow. And then, before the Easter, the bathhouse had to be heated up. So the Jews were put on top of the Russian oven in the house. And somebody found a bean or a rind of onion and said: "**Gelumbiauskas**, somebody is living in your bathhouse". They said: "We see the light of a fire and people walking towards the forest." People started observing. My father begged them, he said: "Leave, because everybody is talking. Dreams—we have dreams about something." (it is not clear what he means by this, but he may be referring to nightmares he and his family has) And they said: "We will not leave."
- Q: So Madam, now I want to ask you about those neighbors. Well, you father took pity on

them and risked his family, his children—

A: His life too, yes.

Q: He risked his life. But the neighbors – they were not risking anything! Why did they have to observe, why did they have to denounce people, if other people were doing good? Well ok; so you cannot do anything, at least don't hinder others! Why? Why?

A: The neighbors—it wasn't a neighbor who denounced them. It was his real brother. They were Bronius, Bolius (Boleslovas) and Petras. It is all written in the book. I did not want to give you that. Three brothers. And the brother (Bronius) came to Boleslovas. He had no servants, while we did. And they talked, and the brother said: "We will take them; we will let those Jews stay." And they did. But he (Boleslovas) knew everything. And then he went to Butrimonys and said: "My brothers are hiding Jews." So the two were arrested and shot. Arrested. But they didn't even enter his (Boleslovas') room to look at what was there. The neighbors only talked.

[01] 22:51:19 - [01] 24:38:24

00:23:42 – 00:25:33

Q: So the brother, who denounced them, what did he get for it?

A: So Riva has told me once: "You wanted to be rich – that's why you were killed." I said: "They did not give anything to my father – Boleslovas got it." Boleslovas was the one, who arranged [the stay]. The Jews probably had promised to give him something. So Boleslovas came to his brothers [and said]: "We have to take pity on them." And he arranged [it all]; he took what he needed. He convinced his brothers. Then he went on and denounced them. When the servant came on Friday, we was hustled with a gun to Butrimonys—"Have you seen any Jews at **Gelumbiauskas'** household?" A man servant and a maid. And this—they did not even come to the brother's room. The fire ablaze, everyone being arrested, everything – and they (Boleslovas' family) were looking through the window. They did not take the brother. Somebody had seen the brother riding a horse to Butrimonys to say that: "My brothers are hiding Jews". That's why they were shot, and the brother remained alive. Riva wanted to send him to Siberia. But my mother and my aunt begged them not to. He is dead now. He had his hand torn by a threshing-machine; then he got down with cancer – he did not live long. But they were rich. They built a two-story house in Vievis and lived in it. A person could not just build [a house out of nothing].

Q: So they became rich right around that time?

A: Yes, yes. And we were talking [and asking]: "Why us? Why did he get rich?"—and how and what. So Riva told me: "Zelka had told me that he gave away his gold." I responded: "He didn't give it to us! Maybe he gave it to that uncle **Gelumbiauskas**." Because he built such a house.

[01] 24:38:25 - [01] 26:33:22

00:25:34 – 00:27:33

Q: Well, so the Jews gave something, ok. So the Jews gave something to the brother, who denounced you. And did the authorities also give him something in return for denouncing?

A: The authorities wanted to send him to Siberia.

Q: But what about the German authorities—the policemen, the German authorities?

A: No, no. He did not get anything. He didn't get anything; he probably didn't get anything. Did not get anything.

Q: So all that he did get, he got it from the Jews?

A: Well, yes, yes. That's how everything was. Then in the fall we were deported. We were deported to Alytus in the fall. We were kept in Alytus for three weeks.

Q: So who was deported together with you?

A: My mother, **Pranė Gelumbiauskienė**, was taken away together with her children. And Bolius (Boleslovas) **Gelumbiauskas** with his family. And when we were not executed, we were taken to Radviliškis. And from Radviliškis we returned home.

Q: What did you do when you were taken to Alytus? Where were you taken to?

A: Well, they took us—they were planning to shoot us just like Jews.

Q: So they took you from home, from Žalioji, the farmstead?

A: Yes. Yes.

Q: And where did they take you then?

A: To Alytus, to Alytus. Not only us. Five thousand [people] were brought there.

Q: And who were those people?

A: Lithuanians. Lithuanians. Our neighbor was there as well. He worked for the authorities. Jonas **Krasinskas**. Riva knows him. He is dead now. He was in Siberia. He spent ten years in Siberia. So he took us. And the priest also advocated for the **Gelumbiauskas'** family to be shot. **Kaušyla**—the priest—he is dead now. He issued a paper for us.

Q: Whom did the priest tell that you should be shot? Whom did he tell this?

A: Because we were Polish and harbored Jews.

[01] 26:33:23 - [01] 28:26:12

00:27:34 – 00:29:30

Q: [But] whom did he tell to that you needed to be shot?

A: The authorities. Riva saw him carrying chairs out of the synagogue – that **Kaušyla**. And Riva sent him to [prison] – he spent ten years in Siberia. Jonas Krasinskas also spent ten years in Siberia. Riva sent them there. Priest **Kaušyla** was in Pivašiūnai once. And **Šteina**, a rich brother of my aunt's, was also there. **Šteina** was standing around in Pivašiūnai, when **Kaušyla** approached him and said: "You know what? **Gelumbiauskas** family has been executed!" But he did not know that **Gelumbiauskas** was his [**Šteina**'s] brother-in-law. He [**Šteina**] nearly fell to the ground. He recalled how [**Kaušyla**] approached him gleefully and said: "You know, **Šteina**, **Gelumbiauskas** family has been executed for [harboring] the Jews." His [**Šteina**'s] face turned [*she imitates a state of shock*]. His sister's husband! But he [**Kaušyla**] served [his time]. He is dead now. **Kaušyla**—and the others too. They served their time and then returned. Well, and then later—we spent five weeks in Radviliškis and then we were released. "Go where you want". So my mother came back then—to our relatives in Lentvaris, from Lentvaris – to Rūdiškės, from Rūdiškės – to Onušiškės. She left us there, and came back to Žalioji to ask for a corner for us to live in. And my sister Janė had escaped from Alytus before.

Q: What was your life like in Alytus like? I mean, you were taken to Alytus, where were you—did they put you in prison, or were you—

A: There was a large room. Some hay had been spread [on the ground]. And that's where we were.

[01] 28:26:13 - [01] 31:00:12

00:29:31 – 00:32:10

Q: And the other people were also there?

A: The others were there as well.

Q: So was it a prison?

A: Well, there were five thousand of us. They were going to shoot us. Before we [came], barracks had been there. And they dug for three days – those, who were sentenced to death, their garb like this [*points to the back of her head*]. They dug for three days [*draws an arc around with a finger*] – we saw it. And we were going to be shot. They were going to shoot us on the third day. Everybody was listed: mothers, children, [their] years of birth. Then we were lined up, like hens with their chickens. And two trucks came. The Lithuanians brought canisters of moonshine with them. They were drinking out of tin mugs, singing and saying: "You will get it soon. We will shoot you in a few minutes." And they were singing. Two trucks. Then came—after the sunset two black cars came. Germans in tall hats got out. Well, [we thought] they were going to shoot us. The Germans talked to those—oh, (SA) hit men!—yes, (SA) hit men. (SA) hit men had come

to Žalioji too. The Germans talked to the (SA) hit men. The two black cars left and the (SA) hit men followed them in the truck. So they left us alive.

Q: And the pits remained there unburied?

A: And the pits remained there. They were trenches. They were not pits, but trenches. It took them three days to dig them. Well, we stayed for a while. Then [people] began fleeing. The wires were cut, and people started fleeing. Those, who were young and strong, fled. My mother could not flee, because she had a child, who was half a year old. My mother stayed. Then we were deported. Put on train cars and deported. It took them three weeks to get two hundred [of us] to Radviliškis. The place was occupied – Jews were there. They shot the Jews, and then put us there instead. There were red bed bugs there. We would be riding, riding [the train], then we would be stop and stand [for a while]. The train cars would stand. Cattle cars. Many had escaped. Only the elderly and the children had remained. But the youth had escaped. They cut the wires. And my fourteen year old sister had escaped too. My mother told her: “Go, at least you will remain alive“ My mother could not leave herself – she had many small children.

[01] 31:00:13 - [01] 33:01:06

00:32:11 – 00:34:16

Q: So how did your sister escape? What was her fate like?

A: Oh, so just yesterday she talked about her escape. She arrived—the neighbors brought her—and she came to the neighbors looking for a place to sleep. The neighbors did not let her in. They said: “We will not let you in. We are afraid to have the same fate as Jews.” The neighbors did not let her stay. So she went to our relatives. The relatives didn’t want her to stay either. But the neighbor even turned her away. Didn’t even give anything to drink. She said: “Go, go, go [away],” she said, “I am afraid to let you in.” And she didn’t give [anything]. She told me this yesterday. She asked me: “Do you know, that the neighbor did not let me in?” She is still angry with her. And so she went to the other neighbors.

Q: So who were those neighbors who sent her away?

A: Oh, she also told me that she had gone home first. Those—what did I call them?—those—

Q: (SA) hit men.

A: (SA) hit men! They had been left at our home. We were deported, and they remained there to guard our belongings. Lithuanian settlers were brought in from Poland. When my sister arrived, they asked [her]: “Who are you, the owner?” She answered: “Yes.” “Did you escape?” She said: “I did not escape; I was released.” So they drove to Butrimonys, found out [what happened], and did not let her in. They said: “You escaped. We will find out if you escaped.” She responded: “I was released.” Well, and that’s when she went to the neighbors. To **Budrikas**. And they did not let her in. They said: “We will not let you

in. We are afraid to let you in.” Then a second neighbor, **Volungevičius**, who had had a good relationship with my father, gave her shelter. And the next day she went to our relatives. She stayed with some relatives, then with others. Then she went to our mother’s, Pranė Gelumbiauskienė’s brother **Šedevičius**, [who lived] close to Onušiškės.

[01] 33:01:07 - [01] 34:47:08

00:34:17 – 00:36:06

Q: Tell me now, what do you know about your father’s fate? Well, what happened to your father when he was taken away?

A: My father spent—my father spent three months in prison. My mother would bring him food – together with my aunt, Bronius **Gelumbiauskas**’[wife]. He would hand her the dirty clothes. And she would give him clean clothes and food. He would hand her the dirty ones. And once, when my mother went there [again], she was told: “**Gelumbiauskas** is not here anymore. And please stop bringing the food.” My mother asked: “Where are they?” “We don’t know.”

Q: What were the conditions at the prison like, when your father was there? What would they do to him? Was he questioned? Interrogated?

A: Well, they would be interrogated and beaten.

Q: How do you know that they were beaten?

A: Because my father’s clothes were soaked in blood. My father was beaten. Because that Jewish woman had said: “Petras was hiding us,” but he did not confess. So my father’s clothes were hard from puss. I would have to wash them.

Q: When the clothes were returned from the prison?

A: The clothes. They were kept there and interrogated. And it was on the last day, the 20th of July—they stopped shooting at the prison after that. It would be like this: if someone was [in prison], they would be taken for works to Germany. So this execution was the last one. And—and so they were executed. Had they not been executed that day, they would be—he would have remained alive.

Q: Where were they executed?

A: In Alytus.

Q: Do you know, where your father’s grave is?

A: We don’t know the grave or anything else.

Q: The location where he was executed?

A: We don't know.

[01] 34:47:09 – [01] 36:27:06

00:36:07 – 00:37:51

Q: Ok, not tell me one more thing. Of those, who came to arrest—who where those (SA) hit men? Do you know their surnames? So, you know **Stočkus**, who was injured, right?

A: I know only **Stočkus**, don't know anyone else.

Q: And Krasinskas?

A: Krasinskas was not present. Krasinskas was present when we were deported. But when the Jews were arrested, he was not present. He was the chief of the rural district. He was not there. We only know **Stočkus**.

Q: So **Stočkus**—

A: None of them are alive anymore. No one. It's over; they are gone.

Q: That's not why we are asking. We don't want to look for them. It's important for us to find out who these people were. Where they locals? Or had they arrived from somewhere else?

A: Well, they were working in Butrimonys. And since they were being paid, everybody went to work as—what did I call them?—those—

Q: (SA) hit men.

A: (SA) hit men. They were unemployed, poor people. They were taking wages—giving wages—and everybody joined. They could also take some things—gold or similar—and people went to work as (SA) hit men. The same with Plechavičius' [detachment] – it was an army. And hundreds joined—

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: The same was here. And when the Russians—when the Germans left, and the Russians arrived—they went into the forest. They were bandits.

Q: The (SA) hit men then left for the forest?

A: For the forest. In the winter we were—it was winter, when we returned from the prison. The Russian came. We were living, and one night armed bandits came. I was sick with mumps then. I had a fever forty one degrees [Celsius] and was afraid to drink water—

[01] 36:27:06

00:37:51

End of interview.

Translated by: Milda Morkyte

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Restrictions: Not to be shown in Lithuania