

RUIKIENĖ, Olga
Lithuania Documentation Project
Lithuanian
RG-50.473*0174

Tape 1, Box 1

In this interview, Olga Ruikienė, a native of Ilakiai (Ylakiai), Lithuania, and born in 1928, speaks about a day in which mass shootings of Jews occurred in her hometown. Ruikienė discusses what happened to the Jewish property after the Jews were shot and killed. She also shares what she knows about her Jewish acquaintances and some of the “white-strippers” after the war.

[01:] 00:18:00 – [01:] 08:54:25

She introduces herself saying she was born in 1928 in Ilakiai and lived there until she was about 18; explains that according to her father’s wishes, at the beginning of the war she started working as a maid for farmers; mentions that before the war there were less than 500 Jews in Ilakiai; shares that she knew Jews and remembers they lived outside of town, but not far from her family’s house; mentions she knew the Jews **Šonkis** (Šionkis, Šomkis) and shop owners **Mindelīs** and **Bernšteinās**; notes she did not know others well; recalls when the Germans came into Ilakiai; remembers they went into town to “bring order” and began shooting Jews; says that in Ilakiai, Germans and “white-strippers” took Jews by force to a synagogue near the railway station; says she does not know how exactly the Jews were brought there; describes “white-strippers” as partisans who fought on the German side, who were called that due to a ribbon on their sleeves; returns to the story about the Jews; claims she did not see those brought to the synagogue and did not look; says her family was unaware of the shooting of Jews but understood what was happening when a German told to her mother, “Juden kaput”; remembers that because their house was near the road the Jews were forced on to get to the shooting site and says the order of Jews was Jewish men going first, then women; says that when the women were forced to go, they screamed and cried so loudly and awfully that she can still hear it; discusses how the men left in the late afternoon and women went later; remembers hearing the guns when the Jews were shot; says she heard a Jew screaming; remembers how one of the Germans brought binoculars to her eyes so she could see the shooting, but drew it immediately away so he could watch for himself, so she did not see anything; thinks the graves were about 300 meters away; says the Germans spent nights at their house and asked people for food.

[01:] 08:55:00 - [01:] 17:31:04

She repeats that when a group of Jewish men were forced to the shooting site, the shooting began immediately; remembers the shooting lasted about half an hour; says the women were shot in the evening; says she did not see how they were forced to the shooting site; notes her mother did not allow her to watch because the women screamed and cried so loud that her mother could not

even listen; remembers a morning when her brother went to the shooting site; describes the murdered Jews and how many were wearing white undershirts and had bare feet, but their clothing and footwear were not nearby; says that women had already taken them away; remembers that by the morning after, she saw women coming from the site with large bags carrying things from the graves; says she only recognized **Šaulskienė**; describes how the corpses were guarded; says that “white-striper” **Budrikis** walked with a gun and watched to ensure nobody regained consciousness; remembers hearing a story that one woman regained consciousness, but **Budrikis** shot her; says she saw other graves dug, but did not see people inside of them; describes the graves; says she did not see how and who were buried or who they were; describes the location of the massacre as the Ilakiai Jewish cemetery; tells how their neighbor **Girdenis** helped the Jew **Šonkis** escape; says she does not know what had happened to **Šonkis** after the war; remembers some names of “white-strippers” including **Narvelas**, whose brother she eventually worked for; tells how she ran with her brother to town to see what happened to the Jewish property; remembers how women took dishes, but does not remember who was there; remember that she took one thing for herself, but her mother told her to throw it away; says the town streets were dirty because there was a lot of paper, documents and matzos thrown out from the houses.

[01:] 17:31:05 - [01:] 21:46:20

She speaks about the fate of the men who shot the Jews; mentions that **Budrikis** emigrated to America, and **Stasys Narvelas** joined the Russian army because he thought that nobody would know that he was a “white-striper,” but it was found out and he was eventually arrested; says after the war she went to work for the farmer **Narvelas** (brother of the “white-striper”); remembers when the Jew **Ickis** arrived to take back his property; says **Narvelienė** gave back beds and a wardrobe, but hid a milk machine and a yellow suitcase; emphasizes she slept in a barn, because in the cottage there was no place for a maid, and that is why she knew some things were hidden, because they were in the barn; remembers that **Ickis** took things to Ilakiai, but he did not live there yet, and she does not know what happened to the furniture; says that after the war Jews did not live in Ilakiai.

[01:] 21:46:21 - [01:] 24:48:00

She returns to the episode in the cemetery; says that among the bodies she did not see any acquaintances; remembers how the victims looked: a boy shot in his head, beautiful young Jewish girl, a baby that lay near her; emphasizes that all were wearing just a shirt and had bare feet; says she is still horrified that their clothes were taken off; says she stood near the bodies for about 10 minutes, then ran with her brother home to share what they saw; remembers that when she served for **Narvelas**, she did not see any Jewish clothes there, because they were farmers, wealthy people; returns once more to her **Narvelas**’ brother **Stasys**, a former “white-striper” who joined the army, but it was not known where he hid the Jewish property.