

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Bobrovsky, Leonid

Date of interview: 8/27/1992

Summary: Leonid Bobrovsky was born on May 4, 1937 in Odessa, Ukraine. He was only three years old when the war began. Leonid's father fought with the partisans during the war. When the Nazis entered Odessa he and his family were in an underground hiding place ("Kotokloomba") reserved for partisans and their families. Leonid and his mother were hiding while his older brother and father helped the partisans. The hiding place was very wet and Leonid along with others became sick. Unfortunately, the Nazis discovered various entrances to the hiding place and used poisonous gas in order to force the people out. At that point, the partisans issued an order to allow the women and children to leave the hiding place at night in an attempt to escape.

Leonid, along with his mother and older brother, left hiding. While trying to escape the three were caught by the Nazis and taken away to the city jail where there were many other Jewish residents. The children and parents were separated and Leonid's mother was taken away with a group of people. He later learned that she, along with the other Jewish residents was murdered. Meanwhile, Leonid and his brother were moved to a different jail. There his brother tried to escape but didn't succeed. When he realized the reality of all the mass murders, he committed suicide by cutting open his vein. Before he died he wrote his name in blood on the jail wall. Later Leonid was taken to camp Ombarova where he remained until liberation. In the ghetto, Leonid worked in spite of being so young. He attributes his survival in the ghetto to the women who protected and took care of him. Upon liberation, Leonid was taken to an orphanage where he stayed until his father's return.

After the war Leonid's father got remarried. Leonid resumed his life in his new family. He went to school and later studied construction at a college. Leonid was married twice and has two daughters. His younger daughter, Polina Bobrovskaya, was named in memory of his mother.