

## **RG-50.477.0255**

### **Summary**

Lev Leybovich was born on June 17, 1929 in Ianovka, Odessa region in Ukraine. Lev had an older sister Sarah, another sister Haya, who lived in Odessa and an older brother Grisha. His older sister and brother died during the war.

In 1939 his father was sent to Blagovoe to work in a bread bakery. His father and his family celebrated Jewish holidays in a big house.

When his parents heard about the war the father tried to get out of the village, but he couldn't find the way out.

When Germans occupied the village, people were held like in a camp. Lev felt that he was lucky that he wasn't killed right away.

They lived in a cattle barns. (Lev was referring to the Jewish people).

At the time of occupation of Odessa, they were sent to Domanevka. His fathers died there. He was left with his mother and an older sister, Sarah.

In Domanevka they lived in barracks. Germans sent everybody to work, but gave no food.

Germans used to gather people and convoy them to an empty garage without any heat in the winter.

He remembered that one day everybody was ordered to gather in a designated place. There were no guards, just Jewish people who were elected to watch the whole group. His mother said to his sister: we have to save Labele (Lev) tell him to run. Lev ran away and was going from village to village. He went back to Domanevka, but didn't find his mother or sister. He left again. He was in the village Davao, when all Jews were sent to Akmechetka. Akmechetka was a camp for Jews surrounded by deep ditches. People didn't get any food, he decided to run away.

He talked with one of the Jewish watchman, after the second attempt he escaped.

Lev was hiding in the woods, knocking on doors asking for scraps of food.

He was moving from village to village. He remembered that once he was caught the by local policemen and one of them wanted to kill him, but mother bit him up and let him go.

He also remembered that in one of the houses a woman opened a door and was very frightened, she gave him some bread but told him to run away, because her own husband, a policemen, recently killed two Jewish children.

In one village a woman took him into her house. He helped her in her garden, looked after her fruit trees. It was a summer time. Later Lev learned that the woman who took him into her house had a brother in a partisan group.

In the winter of 1943 Russian policemen who worked for Germans rounded up all Jews in that village and transported them to the Akmechetka camp.

At that time there were primarily children, the majority of adult Jews were eliminated. They received very little corn, no salt, many children died from being sick. Lev remembered that he couldn't walk, he spent time primarily laying down under his worn out coat. Lev remembered that his legs couldn't move. After some time, all children were transported to Domanevka.

In Domanevka children got food, showers, and conditions were much better. They felt that Soviet army was not far away.

He had an ear infection and he was hospitalized. There were Jewish doctors in the hospital. His sister found him in the hospital. Soviet army came in the spring of 1944.

After liberation Lev and his sister went to their village. Very many Jews from his village were killed and many relatives who lived in Odessa were killed.

Their house was destroyed, so Lev and his sister stayed with their relatives. He lived there all the time worked at the collective farm.

He didn't have time for school after the war he had to work all the time.

His sister survived because she was young and young people were used for labor, children and old people were eliminated.

Regarding antisemitism, Lev thinks that everything became much worse after the war. As a boy he had no problems at school. After the war he heard name calling all the time.

Lev wasn't a religious person. At that time, he "believed" in Stalin, people were crying when Stalin died.

At age of 22 Lev enlisted in mandatory military service, he was stationed for 3 years in Vladivostok.

He returned to the family of his aunt in Odessa. He was a worker, he got married. He had no time for school.

During Khrushchev period in the USSR antisemitism didn't get better at all. It was impossible to move or to find a job.

Lev and his wife and two children immigrated in 1980. He wanted to immigrate to give his children an opportunity for a better life. His son became a programmer, his daughter works as a manicurist, everybody is married.