

SOKOLOVA, Vera
Moldova Documentation Project
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In this interview, Vera Sokolova, a resident of Rybnitsa in Moldova talks about her experiences during World War II. She talks about how her house was in close proximity to the concentration camp that held Jewish prisoners who were brought from Romania and Bessarabia. She concentrates on the cruelty of the guards towards the prisoners, collaboration of local people with the Romanian guards, and different attitudes of the local people to the prisoners.

[01:] 00:29:30 – [01:] 11:21:00

She introduces herself and talks about her origins, place of birth, and place of residence in Rybnitsa during the World War II; talks about where she was at the beginning of the war in June; remembers the first time she heard about the war, her feelings and the feelings of others; talks about the arrival of “voenkoma” officials (the military service) and her husband’s conscription, mentions being pregnant at the time; describes the people in Rybnitsa; [*in response to a question about Jews she starts to cry*]; describes the place where the Jews were kept [*shows it with her hand and cries*]; talks about her school friend **Rosa** and the postman **Yosya** and their executions; talks about Romanian guards, explains the differentiation according to uniform; talks about the warehouse where the Jews were gathered [*points in the window*]; talks about shootings at nights; talks about the trenches where the Jews were left; talks about removal of Jewish valuables and clothes in the warehouse; talks about bringing food to the prisoners, and remembers an incident with an old man and a Romanian guard.

[01:] 11:21:01 – [01:] 19:07:14

She talks about how the locals helped to feed the prisoners; describes the camp, its formation, and the prisoners from different countries, including Romania and Bessarabia (presently part of eastern Moldova); describes how she identified the prisoners nationality by their language and accent; talks about the warehouse; mentions women who gathered things from the Jews in the camp; talks about this way of “making money,” describes the frequency with which Jews were brought to the camp and the number of deaths that occurred on the way; talks about the stories she had heard from others; describes the set up of the camp; says that she knew the women who collected belongings from the Jews; talks about going to a bazaar and seeing columns of Jewish prisoners; mentions an incident she witnessed - a woman giving birth in one of these columns.

[01:] 19:07:15 – [01:] 30:12:25

She starts talking about the burial ground for the Jewish victims; talks about the shooting of the Jews; describes the columns of Jewish prisoners, how many there were, the frequency of seeing them, and their arrival; talks about being afraid of the Romanian guards; describes arrivals of the Jewish prisoners on foot from Bessarabia, the convoy, and the guards; talks about absence of actual German guards; describes the cruelty of the Romanian guards; returns to the story about the woman who gave birth in the convoy; talks about threats from the guards; describes the ghetto, the periods of its existence; mentions that she had binoculars and used them to watch the events in the ghetto; describes the treatment of Jews in the camp; talks about shouts, beatings, and shootings of the Jews by the Romanian guards.

[01:] 30:13:00 – [01:] 40:45:05

She talks about the Soviet prisoners, describes the conditions in which they were kept and their morale; talks about giving them food, calls them “vlasovtsy” (Russian Liberation Army, ROA); remembers one prisoner with no legs who asked her to mail a letter to his family; talks about being afraid of the guards and having to leave the prisoners; describes the building where the shootings occurred; talks about seeing dead bodies and finding dead bodies buried in graves near the old train station; talks about reburying these dead bodies; describes the carriages which were made for taking out dead bodies, possibly also for people still alive; mentions the big involvement of locals in this process as well as the process of expropriating Jewish valuables and clothes; explains that she cannot speak with assurance about escapes; describes the territory of the camp and its wooden fence; talks about hearing shootings mostly at night.

[01:] 40:45:06 – [01:] 49:50:21

She talks about not being able to go near the vicinity of the camp, but seeing the transports of Jews in and out; talks about working in the underground; returns to the question of how the Jews were removed, and says that they were mostly shot; describes the location where the Jews were shot in the direction of Dubosari; talks about Romanians building trenches there; describes the second ghetto, which was established in the Jewish part of Rybnitsa; mentions being there once during the war; talks about the conditions in the second ghetto; describes how she witnessed hunger; explains that Jews were unable to leave the ghetto because it was guarded; talks about the Jews who survived and their origins.

[01:] 49:50:22 – [01:] 58:58:11

She continues talking about a second ghetto in Rybnitsa, talks about the number of people in it; talks about Jewish survivors; explains that she is not sure where they were from; [*in response to question*] remembers a body of a local Jewish glass maker woman she saw in **Dnestr**; talks about a failed evacuation attempt; discusses the details of what she saw in the camp through her binoculars; talks specifically about guards beating children and the elderly in the camp; talks more about wagons with bodies [*cries*]; describes five wagons that were used to carry Jewish things, bodies, and those who could not walk.