

Shtirba, Mihail  
Moldova Documentation Project  
Russian  
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Tape 1

In this interview, Mihail Shtirba, born in 1924, who has lived in Kamenka (present-day Transnistria) most of his life, talks about life of his hometown's local Jews during the Holocaust. He focuses on witnessing mass extermination in Kamenka. In addition to this, he mentions an incident with Roma and German soldiers, and describes life of ordinary people during the Romanian-German occupation of Kamenka.

[00:] 00:36:11 – [00:] 08:35:13

He talks of his background and where he was when the war started; states the amount of Jews in Kamenka before and after the war; describes the occupation by German and Romanian soldiers of the local school, discusses the beginning of Romanian and German soldiers rule over Jews and their various extermination tactics.

[00:] 08:35:14 – [00:] 17:43:25

He tells the story of **Ershko Moldovan**, the first Jew in Kamenka to be killed by the Romanian soldiers; describes the origin of his nickname [*Moldovan*]; recalls seeing the death of **Ershko**, describes what happened to his corpse; comments on the decision by soldiers to gather Jews at a hotel-type place, **Zaezd**; describes its location, security, and the way of life for Jews there; discusses witnessing Jews being taken away to a place where they were killed, describes the way it was done and the amount of Jews and soldiers present.

[00:] 17:44:00 – [00:] 25:11:12

He discusses throwing the Jews that were shot into a pit; describes the size of the pit; comments on how the shooting system worked; remembers being told to leave the area, but hearing voices coming out from the ground, mentions him coming back to the place of the shooting afterwards with **Alyosha (Alesha)**, **Kolya (Kolia)**, and **Volodya (Volodia)**, comments on the Jews digging themselves out of the ground after the shootings.

[00:] 25:11:13 – [00:] 35:27:14

He talks about Romanian soldiers drowning Jews in an ice hole after the mass execution at the pit; describes the drowning system, size of the ice hole, and amount of soldiers and Jews present; mentions seeing his Jewish acquaintance **Ratsa** almost making a soldier drown in the ice hole, comments on her death; describes the way soldiers transported Jews from **Zaezd** to the place of

drowning; mentions following the procession; describes the weather and mentions escaping Jews being shot.

[00:] 35:27:15 - [00:] 42:49:10

He describes the last Jews gathered and sent somewhere in the winter of 1942; comments on different backgrounds of Jews; mentions a Jewish father asking Ms. **Slyusar (Slyutsar)** [*nickname; Olyubulay, or Olubulai*], who was not a Jew, to take his daughter; comments on a soldier noticing this; describes the reaction of Ms. **Slyutsar**, remembers the woman hiding the girl, and after numerous raids, she asked for advice from the city official, **Primar**; discusses the change of the location of the girl, comments on the girl's father returning to Kamenka three years later and taking the girl; describes the present-day place of drowning.

[00:] 42:49:11 – [00:] 52:31:01

He talks about an incident when Jews **Lyonya (Lyova in Hebrew)** and his father **Zyoma** were saved; describes how **Primar** and Mr. **Grigoriy Shevcov (Shevtsov)** hid them in a barn and saved their lives; comments on the unwillingness of other Jews who had been saved to talk about where they had lived during the war; mentions the lack of Roma in Kamenka during the war, describes some coming from **Soroka** after the end of the war; talks about an incident in 1942 when German soldiers shot Roma in a bar; mentions the reason behind this event; mentions two young men, **Misha Kucher (Kutcher)** and **Lyonya** being shot in a vineyard; mentions seeing the graves of the boys; mentions their father coming back to Kamenka after the war and remarrying; mentions the death of the first wife; talks about **Zyoma** finding his house turned into someone's office, but being allowed to make a room in its barn and live there; comments on the death of his second wife and a father of the boys abandoning the city.

[00:] 52:31:02 – [00:] 55:57:23

He describes the way Romanian soldiers treated the local population; comments on a rule of not going out of the house, and being beaten by soldiers if caught breaking the rule; describes the political sides of Russians and Romanians in Kamenka during the war; mentions **Zaedz** where Jews were kept between the events of massive shootings and when they were drowned; comments on the absence of Jews in the city after these events.