

Witness 186R, Trip 5R, Metchetinskaia district, Rostov on Don.
Filmed 24 September 2011. Parts 1 and 2

186R was born 7 September 1931 on Rossoshinskii farm, Metchetinskii district, Rostov on Don oblast. [Metchetinskii district no longer exists; in 1960 it was incorporated into Zernogradskii district.] His father was a Ukrainian; he worked as a driver. His mother was of Cossack heritage. R186 also mentions a nearby farming community called Pishvanov.

During the war, 186R and his mother worked on the “Marxist” collective farm; his father was at the front. He describes work on the collective farm after the occupation began on 25 August 1942. The Germans appointed a Russian “starosta” (boss) on the farm and there were two Russian policemen, who wore armbands and carried rifles. The boss was called Uncle Vanya; he hung his mother because she was a communist [Party member].

186R observed from a distance the movement of freight trains loaded with people (“maybe Jews,” he was not sure); the cries of people; the [Russian or Ukrainian] guards and dogs; people being shot along the railroad tracks. A German officer spoke Russian [most likely a collaborationist].

At the end of the video, 186R shows Patrick Desbois where people, mainly women and children, were shot. Mounted police [Russians or Ukrainians] drove people to the shooting grounds, a nearby ravine. In 1942, trains on this line were headed to Stalingrad. 186R never told anyone what he saw because he feared the police.

In 1952, 186R saw bones and skulls being reburied. However, he did not know whether they were those of soldiers or civilians. (By way of emphasizing that he did not pay attention to who was who ethnically, 186R rather casually mentions that his (late) wife was Armenian but does not give any other information about her.)