

Witnesses 189R and 190R, Rostov on Don.

189R and 190R relay information they heard from witnesses about what happened at the massacre site in Rostov on Don. 189R came to the site for the first time after the war.

Jews were shot at several killing sites, and two are shown in the interview. There were 6 assembly points in the city where the SS separated men, women and children, before they were taken to the killing sites. The Germans tried to conceal the killing by telling nearby villagers to leave for two days. [Not clear whether this was effective.] The Jews were forced to undress and their clothes were taken to Gestapo Headquarters on Krasnoarmeiskaia Street [Red Army Street]. Women hid jewels in their clothes, and crates full of jewelry were carted away by the SS.

On camera, 189R and 190R show one site, near a brick factory. The place is now a memorial, built in 1975. The 5 columns symbolize the five years of the war. In 2012 there was a plan to inscribe the names of all the Jews killed on the columns. [Not clear whether the plan was carried out.] Jews were brought to this site in trucks and killed by local police (Russians, Georgians, Ukrainians, Chechens) under SS command. German officers only supervised. 300-400 Jews were killed in two days (11-12 August 1942). There were only a few survivors; a few who were merely wounded crawled home at night.

Among the non-Jews killed here were Soviet POWs, Soviet soldiers in a hospital, and Communist Party members. Just before the Germans retreated the Gestapo shot 1,500 Soviets who were in prisons.

Executions at this site continued on and off until liberation, 14 February 1943. 190R refers to a photo of the excavation at the site after liberation; the photo now hangs at a Jewish school next to the synagogue.

Another killing site was a nearby quarry. Children separated from their parents were killed here and their bodies were thrown into the quarry. 189R and 190R think that 1,000 children were killed.

The last part of the interview takes place at the ruins of an NKVD sanitarium where other children were killed. 190R says that the children (about 5 years old) were poisoned and died within minutes. They were told the poison was a disinfectant and so suspected nothing. Adult Jews undressed here and were taken in gas vans to Snake Ravine. Some were already dead by the time they got to Snake Ravine, where the rest were shot.

After the war, the archives that the Gestapo left behind were taken to Taganrog, but they are still classified and 189R has not received permission to view them.