

RG Number:

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Interview conducted on July 19, 2005 by S. N. Amosova, S. V. Nikolaeva

Interview Summary:

Raisa Sergeevna Chernova, born in 1934 in Tulchin.

She lived her entire life in Tulchin, except during the war when she was at Pechora concentration camp. Her father was Russian - Sergei Antipovich Chernov a military service man; he served in Tulchin in 49th cavalry regiment. Her mother worked as a supervisor at a sewing factory. Her maiden name was Marian Pisakhovna Tsfasman. Her mother went to work age 11 as a seamstress. Her mother completed seven grades in a Jewish school. Her parents were married in 1933 during the famine. Her mother married her father to save her family from hunger. Before the war in the 30s many Jewish women married Russian military men.

Her mother was one of five sisters. Her sisters were also in Pechora. One sister and her five children died there. Another sister lost a son and a daughter at Pechora. The son Yakov was 16 years old. The police shut him when he was caught taking people from the camp to the ghetto where life was easier. Police was worse than the Germans. Her mother's one brother was killed by a carriage when he was little. Her mother cut all his clothes to pieces and sent them down the river. It was customary at the time set on fire the footwear of the deceased.

Her grandmother died in the concentration camp in 1943.

Her mother celebrated Jewish holidays. After the war she married for a second time to a Jew. Her stepfather lost his wife and nine children at Pechora. The family spoke Yiddish.

Her son understands Yiddish, but speaks poorly. Her grandson understands Yiddish but does not speak it. They celebrated Passover, Rosh Hashanah, New Year, Shevuot – all Jewish holidays. Her brother was born after the war and was circumcised on the seventh day.

Babies were named after deceased relatives. It was important that at least the first letter of the name was the same.

There was a rabbi in Tulchin who slaughtered kosher chickens. Their food was kosher. The whole center of town was Jewish until the rabbi died and Jews left the city. There was a bazaar in the center of the town. All tradesmen were Jewish. Her stepfather was a shoe repairman. Jewish homes had verandahs and half-basements with exit to street where they practiced their trade. After the road to Israel was opened, almost all Jews left for Israel.

Before the war she lived in Kaptsonivka where poor Jews lived. She describes their house and furniture including a buffet. Weddings were celebrated under a chuppa. There was a klezmer band with four musicians.

For the holidays her mother prepared a chicken, gefilte fish, "boyme beyklis" (butter buns), homentashen. Her mother sang to her in Russian ("Papirosov") and Yiddish – "Sheyne meydele" (a pretty girl) and "Varnochkis" "Papurone kinder" (paper children – meaning that the children were killed during the war and only photographs remained).

She and her son fast on Yom Kippur. They now celebrate Jewish holidays at the community center.

When she was pregnant, her mother protected her from evil eye with a pin and a red cloth under the pillow. She was not to look at fire to prevent birth marks. She wanted a boy more than a girl. Before the war there were povitukhas (peasant women to oversee births).

After the birth, a cat was placed in the crib and rocked; after the cat jumped out, the baby was placed in the crib. After the war there were maternity hospitals.

Every year they go to Pechora and the cemetery on days of remembrance. (Evervos)

Language: Russian, Yiddish ; **Geographic Name:** Tulchin (Ukraine)