

**Oral history interview with Efim Menashevich Karetnik**

**RG-50.632.0029**

**Interview conducted by O. Gabe, S. Stepanishchev; deciphered by M. Gershkovich**

**Summary**

**Karetnik, Efim Menashevich**, born in 1939

His family came from Siberia where Jews were exiled under the tsar. He still has relatives there. His father was born in Tulchin.

In 1933 children were dying of the plague. Jews were not buried in a casket. – They were wrapped in white cloth like mummies, surrounded by planks and covered by dirt.

There was a rabbi in Tulchin. The rabbi performed circumcisions on the seventh day after birth. The rabbi also named the child in honor of the father or grandfather.

Jews used to bake their own matzo for Passover. They also celebrated Roshe ha-Shona.

When a child was born, in order to protect him from the evil eye, a Jewish neighbor woman Riva placed a beet on the child's belly. She had special remedies to cure children from various ailments. They also used to also tie a red ribbon to the baby's arm to guard against the evil eye. They called it "a golden shtrikale." They also used to place a cat in the cradle before the baby was placed there in order to take away all ills.

Describes other Jewish superstitions.

There was a man called Shmerka who cured his son's dislocated shoulder on two occasions. People came to him for cures from all neighboring villages.

He used to speak Yiddish but not much now. People who took care of burials were called "bagreybos." Jews were buried without shoes. Jews place small stones on the grave. Jews do not visit cemeteries on Shabbat.

His mother was from a poor family, with many children. His father had 14 brothers.

Kosher butchers were well off.

There was a Jewish woman matchmaker in Tulchin.

He used to live in an old house in Tulchin with five Jewish families. His family had two small rooms. Jewish homes had two entries -- to escape attacks from the "Black Hundreds" bands who attacked and killed Jews with swords. His mother and a younger brother used to hide from the attackers in the attic. Jews also used to hide in cellars with two entries. There were also underground tunnels, which were destroyed after the war. Jewish homes had shutters to protect their homes from rocks thrown at them during holidays.

His mother told him about a priest Berdichansky who came out of his church to stand before the attacking bands to defend the Jews.

In some cases in Tulchin Jews converted to Christianity. His wife is Ukrainian, but she celebrates all Jewish holidays with him.

Now there is a Jewish society in Tulchin.

His son speaks and writes Hebrew. He completed the university and is a jurist in Israel.

Language:

Russian

Yiddish

Geographic Name:

Tulchin (Ukraine)