

Summary of Oral History: Anna Mikheyevna

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Summary:

Anna Mikheyevna, born in 1920 described her pre-war and postwar life in Ukraine; she remembers how her father was repressed by the Stalinist regime because they did not want to join a collective farm; previously they lived in Bratslav region, in what is now Monastyrsk settlement; she moved to Tulchyn to work at the shoe factory; she never studied at school; her aunt taught her how to read Russian; she was raised in a very religious family; the house she lives used to belong to Jews but she bought it from a woman recently; she remembers how she read in Church Slavonic; earlier the street was Jewish, then Jews left and sold their houses; Jews multiply very quickly, they are the first people as sacred texts say; she believes Jews are better people than common (Ukrainian) people, they have better conscience and better personalities; she thinks their father was repressed because they believed in God; she argues that it is a sin for women to wear men's cloths as sacred texts forbid that; they would call Jews 'Zhydy' locally and themselves – 'Muzhyki'; she speaks about a Jewish man from the area who converted to the Christian faith after he had spent many years in jail for the murder of a Jewish man whom he had not killed; Jews would celebrate their holidays by themselves, they would not invite Christians and would not share food, they would rather pray in their language; Jews would speak Ukrainian-Russian mixture, a local dialect, with the local non-Jewish population; Jewish burial rituals would be different – the body would be carried out from the house at night by several men who would put the body on a litter; dead Jews when they die are 'not clean'(sinful), they do not go to heaven, they go to hell, their religion does not have heaven; men who would carry out a body would also be 'not clean'; they had a few Jews left on their street, but there was no synagogue left and Jews themselves would not know their holidays that well; she would argue that unlike Christian religion where boys and girls get baptized, in Judaism only boys have a special ceremony which is circumcision, but even the tradition of circumcision faded away as Jews know nothing and have no synagogues there; previously synagogues existed in Tulchyn and in Bratslav; after the war she received a letter stating that her father had been innocent and was rehabilitated; she remembered how in 1943 the Germans asked people from the vicinity to go to Vynnytsia and see the victims of the NKVD (KGB) crimes by car; she went there, too; there were many pits with bodies and many bodies; the Nazis were inviting other countries to come, but they did not; Stalin killed many priests; she speaks about Stalin and Beria who used to use women and the kill them; in their town mixed marriages between Jews and Christians were very rare; Anna speaks about a Jewish man with his wife still living nearby and another house with a man and a Jewish man living there.