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Oral history interview with Larisa Antonova

Larisa Antonova born in 1930, in Novozybkov, Russia, describes her life before the war; not having any Jewish neighbors, but the town did have a lot of Jews; the Jews stayed in Novozybkov when the war started; recalled how some of the Jewish residents were able to evacuate, while others were forced to stay in the town; recalls her interactions with the Jewish children in the community; remembers how the Jews were marked with yellow stars sown on their backs; Jews were allowed to stay in their own homes; remembers seeing three sleds full of Jewish men, women and children, being taken to the woods to be killed; recalls that everyone, including the Jews knew they were about to die; accidentally saw what was happening. Just went for a walk; there were police officers on those sleds; police were wearing white bands across their arms; a feeling of crippling fear; so many familiar faces, so many friends; those living closer to the scene of the execution claimed the "earth was breathing". This most likely meant that not everybody who was shot was dead; recalls a story of a young boy who was able to escape; the young boy was too scared to accept any help from Larisa's grandmother; after the killings in the woods, there were no more Jews in Novozybkov; recalls how the police officers in charge had robbed the Jews of their belongings; remembers hearing stories of the partisans causing trouble for the Germans; heard stories of Jews having to give up their valuables and belongings; recalls how a seventeen year old girl was accidentally shot by Germans; recalls how Germans would shoot partisans and anybody who involved themselves with the partisans in any way; there were signs around the city that warned of capital punishments for hiding Jews and partisans; remembers moving into her aunt and uncle's home during the war; uncle was a communist so he had to move away; recalls how the Germans aerial bombed Novozybkov; the Germans ended up hitting a train stations where large amounts of injured people were being held; a majority of those held in the station ended up perishing; Germans dropped racial slurs printed on flyers directed towards the Jews from planes over Russian territory; Jews were forced to into heavy manual labor.