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Elena Matveyeva, born in 1931, in Velizh, Russia, describes her life before the war; living with her aunt and her family; the numerous Jewish residents living in Velizh and having good interactions with them; befriending a Jewish family that lived across the street from her family; how many of the Jews in Velizh left before the Germans arrived; the beginning of the war and her father being taken away; the bombing of Velizh two weeks after the war started; escaping with her family to a small village for a short time and moving back to Velizh; how the Jewish population began wearing the yellow markers and the Germans forced Gentile men and Jews to hard labor; the forced relocation of Jews to a ghetto that was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Germans and local police; the post-war trials of the local police who guarded the ghettos; the large fire in the ghetto during the winter and seeing Jews being shot as they tried to escape; hearing that many Jewish families played dead in the snow to avoid execution; a German bringing a young Jewish boy her family the night after the fire; taking care of the boy for a single day before he left to find his own people; many Jews being protected and saved by Russians in Velizh; locals moving into the abandoned Jewish homes and also burning down homes to avoid letting the Germans have any supplies; returning to Velizh from Belarus in 1944 during liberation to see an overgrown foundation of a city; how the Germans kicked all of the residents out of their homes and into jail in Velizh; the residents being taken at night to Belarus over the frozen river by horse; how all the men were gone from the city and only women, children, and teens remained; being happy to be away from the war zone; having to live in the basement while tanks and artillery were being fired upon the house; being warned by Russian soldiers to leave or the Germans would end up killing them and having nowhere to run to; there was a small opening that only the children could fit through; mother and grandmother tried to undress to get through but could not; Russian soldier saved their lives; hearing accounts of the atrocities of the Germans towards the remaining locals; how at first the Jews in the ghetto were allowed to leave and return and they were allowed to bury their dead in the graveyard; the death of many Jews from hunger; seeing a large pile of dead bodies after the fire in Velizh when the firefights and artillery battle was ensuing; and seeing a dead child frozen in the river.