

Tatyana Naumovna Matyukina. Interviewed 18 October 2015
Summary by Joseph Bradley

Born in 1929 in the town of Unecha, along the Briansk railroad, Briansk oblast, in the Russian USSR. Father was Naum Borisovich Liberov, a factory worker. Mother was Sofia Lvovna Liberova. Tatyana had 2 older brothers (Yanni and Abram) and 2 older sisters (Faina and Zinaida). In 1936 the family moved to the town of Klinttsy, also in Briansk oblast, where she spent the war years.

Klintsy was occupied [August 20, 1941]. Tatyana's family tried to escape but were surrounded and forced to return to Klinttsy. Her older brother [Yanni?] and her sister's husband were in the Soviet army. [Not clear whether they survived.] Tatyana heard shootings every day. The Germans ordered a curfew and residents were forbidden to shelter Jews; Jews were forced to wear a yellow star. Soon the elderly Jews and children were ordered to live in a ghetto in the village of Bannyi. Working Jews and their families, including the Liberovs, were sent to a nearby ghetto connected to a factory, where they lived until December 5, 1941. Tatyana describes survival in the ghetto, which was guarded by local policemen [Russian; perhaps also Ukrainian].

In the morning of December 5, Germans entered the ghetto, forced the Jews to undress, searched their clothes for valuables, and told the Jews to put their clothes back on. That evening, the Jews, including Tatyana's family except her father, were taken from the ghetto to the forest, where they were thrown into pits and shot. Tatyana lagged behind and managed to run away. No one else in her family escaped. (Her father continued to work until February, when he was killed.)

Tatyana describes her attempts to hide with various families, including the Kosyanin family who hid her in their attic. Finally, two schoolteachers, Alexander Mikhailovich Podvoisky and his wife Alexandra Ivanovna Podvoisky, whose own daughter had died, hid Tatyana in their cellar, attic and barn for the duration of the occupation. [Liberation was September 25, 1943.] Alexander Podvoisky was principal of School No. 4 in Klinttsy. When Germans were looking for blond children to seize and send to Germany, Podvoisky warned the parents not to send their children to school that day. He also procured papers for Tatyana. Tatyana says that the Podvoiskys risked punishment every day; some neighbors knew that Tatyana was hidden but did not betray her. The Podvoiskys became second parents for her and she lived with them for 33 years and cared for them in their old age. She later found out that they had become [in 2010] Righteous among the Nations.