

Maria Firman

Interviewer - *In your village, how many people died from starvation?*

MF - I can't tell you. Many. When my mother died, she was the last to die. My uncle hadn't gotten home yet, it was a bit far to walk. By that time someone had already buried their dead in the grave. Nobody asked if it was theirs or not. If there was a grave, they'd bring them and put them in. A lot of people were buried without a coffin, without anything, just wrapped in a cloth, and that's it. Our elderly neighbor was buried this way. In my family three people died, my sister, who was four years old, my mother and father. Three of us were left. I was a little over nine years old; I had turned nine in September, and in the spring my parents had died. So it was four months or so. My older brother was a little over eleven years old, and the oldest was not yet thirteen.

Interviewer - *And they survived?*

MF - My brother who was eleven would collect grass, or sorel, and would cook it, or orach. I don't even know what else. Later mushrooms started to grow, and he would collect mushrooms. My uncle, father's brother, would come over and tell him to be careful, to cook them through, so that you don't poison yourself. And father's brother, we were his relatives, so when he was able to bring something he always would.