

Interviewee: Vera Lechky born in 1925, in the village of Osytnyazhka, Novomyrhorod raion, Kirovohrad oblast.

Interviewer(s): Ariadna Ochrymovych, Orest Zakydalsky

Date: November 12, 2009

Description: Bogdana Torbina

00:00:34 – Interviewee introduces herself.

00:00:58 – Interviewee describes the size and demographic of her village.

00:01:26 – Interviewee talks about the social class status of her family.

00:01:28 – Interviewee states that her family was subjected to dekurkulization and deported to Siberia.

00:01:42 – Interviewee explains that since her brother's father-in-law was a communist, they were able to create fake documents saying that they were not Kurkuls.

00:01:55 – Interviewee talks about moving to the Russian city of Rostov in 1929.

00:02:47 – Interviewee describes life and work in Rostov.

00:03:39 – Interviewee recalls that in 1932 her brother, who had remained in Ukraine, sent her family a letter advising them to stay in Rostov for at least another year due to the famine.

00:04:02 – Interviewee explains that her family returned to Ukraine despite her brother's warning.

00:05:18 – Interviewee recalls seeing a lot of starving people at the train station in Kyiv.

00:05:56 – Interviewee remembers her neighbours begging her family for food.

00:06:48 – Interviewee recalls her mother selling her valuables in exchange for food.

00:07:07 – Interviewee says that her mother died after catching a cold.

00:07:55 – Interviewee talks about how her neighbours died of hunger.

00:08:16 – Interviewee describes what people ate during the Holodomor.

00:08:51 – Interviewee recounts a story about the only surviving daughter of her neighbour's family.

00:09:49 – Interviewee tells a story of how her neighbour's daughter, Valentinka, was kidnapped and killed for food.

00:12:25 – Interviewee talks about collecting stalks of wheat.

00:14:50 – Interviewee mentions feeling hungry.

00:15:46 – Interviewee mentions her siblings' ages during the Holodomor.

00:16:42 – Interviewee states that all of her siblings survived the famine.

00:16:48 – Interviewee recalls her brother taking care of her and her sisters.

00:18:31 – Interviewee describes what she ate during the famine.

00:19:44 – Interviewee recalls being chased away for collecting stalks of wheat.

00:20:05 – Interviewee discusses mortality in her village.

00:22:29 – Interviewee reiterates that her family returned to Ukraine in the middle of the Holodomor.

00:23:32 – Interviewee recounts how the Germans took her to Austria.

00:24:53 – Interviewee describes the destruction of the village church.

00:25:51 – Interviewee discusses anti-religion propaganda in her school.

00:27:27 – Interviewee talks about her extended family.

00:30:19 – Interviewee recalls witnessing hungry and dead people at the Kyiv train station.

00:32:01 – Interviewee says that the sisters who killed her neighbour's child for food were arrested and were never seen again.

00:32:44 – Interviewee explains that her neighbour's last surviving daughter, Hanusia, was murdered for food as well.

00:34:07 – Interviewee discusses mass burials.

00:35:49 – Interviewee talks about the brother who decided to stay in Russia.

00:36:43 – Interviewee mentions a pond in her village where people would go to fish.

00:39:31 – Interviewee recalls people rebelling against the regime.

00:41:32 – Interviewee recounts her brother stealing wheat from the kolhosp.

00:43:17 – Interviewee recalls a story of a village boy being punished by a brigadier for collecting beets.

00:45:35 – Interviewee states that the most difficult time during the Holodomor was the day her mother died.

00:46:46 – Interviewee talks about developing fear of spirits and paranoia after the death of her mother.

00:48:16 – Interviewee recalls seeing her friend's mother after she hung herself.

00:49:44 – Interviewee explains that she was hungry the entire time.

00:49:55 – Interviewee talks about begging her siblings for food.

00:50:52 – BREAK IN INTERVIEW

00:50:55 – Interview about Holodomor ends.

00:51:15 – Interviewee mentions that she moved to a different village, Tishkivtsi, after returning from Germany.

00:52:00 – Interviewee recalls Germans coming to her village on June 22nd.

00:58:32 – Interviewee describes the villagers' reactions to German occupation.

00:59:36 – Interviewee talks about being forcefully taken to Austria.

00:59:39 – Interviewee talks about her brothers during German occupation.

01:01:25 – Interviewee describes working in Austria.

01:01:39 – Interviewee recalls her journey to Austria.

01:03:24 – Interviewee describes coming to the city of Vilher and being assigned work.

01:03:32 – Interviewee says that she was assigned to work at a pub.

01:03:55 – Interviewee explains how Ukrainians from different parts of Ukraine were treated in Austria.

01:07:29 – Interviewee recalls hearing about Europeans going to Canada and America for work.

01:12:34 – Interviewee describes working at a factory.

01:14:05 – Interviewee talks about coming to Canada in 1947 as part of a year-long housework contract.

01:15:25 – Interviewee talks about getting married in Canada in 1949.

01:16:08 – Interviewee mentions that she visited Ukraine as a tourist for the first time in 1969 but that tourists were not allowed in the villages.

01:16:44 – Interviewee mentions being looked down on for moving to Canada when she visited her family in Ukraine.

01:17:31 – Interviewee returns to her discussion of her visit to Ukraine as a tourist for the first time.

01:18:08 – Interviewee describes her second visit to Ukraine.

1:23:06 – End of Interview.