

Julia Woychyshyn

In the village council, statistics were taken very seriously. Everything had to be documented with statistics. So when people died they had to be accounted for, and a cause of death given. There was an order from the oblast that starvation was not to be given as a cause of death for those who died from starvation. The head of the village council came up with the idea to list exhaustion or dysentery as the cause of death. It would be very easy to tell from these documents who died [of starvation]. Why did supposedly healthy people die from exhaustion? That's how the statistics were kept. This was the responsibility of the head of the village council. My father was only the bookkeeper, and there was also a secretary, but because there were too few of them, my father also helped. And he saw [how they kept the statistics]. But they simply didn't care. Who could he tell? They didn't think that he would leave [the USSR] and write about it here.

My father was an orphan from the age of eleven. [The authorities] constantly harassed him. I remember that from time to time they would call him to the NKVD. He would have to go to Chernyakhov, the county town. He never knew if he would come home, so we always said our farewells. He was harassed, first, because he was the son of a kulak, and second, because he married what they referred to as a Pole. My mother was from Galicia [Western Ukraine, until 1939 ruled by Poland], from the mountains. In 1914 she was separated from her parents, and lived in my father's house, and they eventually got married. So [the authorities] knew she was from Western Ukraine, and constantly wanted to know if we had any correspondence, and so forth. That's what life was like. My father was terrified of them. They searched for him in Germany [after WWII], because they didn't like to let victims go.