

RG-50.421.0003

Interviewee: Vasile Gheorghe

Interviewer: Michelle Kelso

Interview Location: village of Budeshty (Budesti) in the region of Maramuresh (Northern Romania)

Date of Interview: August 28, 1995.

Summary

Vasile Gheorghe, 83 years old at the time of the interview, discusses being part of the Roma community, Caldari group, and an agricultural worker.

As a result of the order of Marshal Antonescu, between Fall of 1942 and Spring of 1943 the Roma population of Romania was by force deported to Transnistria. At the time, Vasile and his wife Maria with their five children and the rest of their family, including older relatives, their parents, had to abandon their livelihood and travel for several weeks from village to village, walking after their wagons were taken away from them facing very difficult conditions. As a result, three of their children, after becoming ill, died, forcing the young parents to bury them far from their home village. There was a lack of food and sanitary condition. After many weeks on the road, they arrived at the small town of Tighina and for a while they lived among the local Ukrainian population, housed in a communal building with ten other families in one large room. Their basic food consisted of corn which they had to grind by and cook it with water making "mamaliga". They also had some potatoes. They did not have any milk to give to the children who were constantly hungry. Whatever savings they were able to hide, they used to provide food for the children.

When the local Russian population provided some work, they were paid with food which was scarce for everyone. As a result of the intervention of Romanian Queen in May 1943 the Roma deportees were allowed to return to Romania, traveling on foot, which was difficult but they were glad to be able to do so.

He discusses the fact that many male members of the Roma community were serving in the Romanian military, thus it was recognized that they and their families should not have been deported. The deportation resulted in many deaths among parents and the elderly, leaving many children orphaned. Relatives and the Roma community took care of the orphans.

Being subjected to maltreatment from the local militia and the gendarmes during the deportation. The separate, distinct groups of Hungarian Roma and Romanian Roma.