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ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS, Aleksas  
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In the interview, Aleksas Aleksandravičius, born in 1919 in Šiluva, discusses the difficult life in the Lithuanian villages of **Pravieniskės** and Seredžius, as well as a **Boulogne** town concentration camp in Paris. As a Roma child during the German occupation, Aleksandravičius remembers the violent and cruel Germans that would hit the Roma. He talks about the number of prisoners in the camp, and comments that he did not think he would survive the cruelty at the concentration camps.

Box 1, Tape 1

[01:] 00:40:00 – [01:] 09:10:25  
00:00 – 09:26

Aleksandravičius remembers the first year of the German invasion and when they began to capture the Roma; jokes that at that time, the Germans were not that smart because the Roma would run away from them: they would jump out of the train, run away, and hide in the forest; recalls that one day, a few young Lithuanians shot a German, and then the Germans retaliated by capturing them; says his uncle was taken to the Ninth Fort (in the Šilainiai eldership of Kaunas); says that the next day his aunt went to take food to him, but she did not find him alive; notes that from then on, the Roma families hid in the forest from 1942 to 1943; says that the Germans would not go to the forest to look for them; says the Roma women would beg for food, wood, and sometimes horses as well; remembers Lithuanian families hid as well as his and other Roma families; recalls March 6 when all of the families were taken prisoner; says they were caught when driving into the forest; comments that his son was two and a half years old; says they were taken to an area of only Roma families, where they had to load wood and take it to the concentration camp; says there were Ukrainian guards, but the Germans told them what to do; notes there was a man named **Bombonešis** was a leader that everybody knew.

[01:] 09:11:00 – [01:] 19:05:24  
09:27 – 19:47

Aleksandravičius remembers a day when he came back from work and nobody was at his barracks in Pravėniškis; says a Polish woman from the other barrack explained that the Germans took them into the cars and drove away; says that while loading wood he had heard shooting, but did not pay attention; says that after talking to the Polish woman he realized that those from the Pravėniškis barrack were probably killed; talks about his mother-in-law who was crying and asking where her children were; says the leader's assistant took her by a tree and shot her, explaining to her that her kids were there; says one day he, along with others, were taken in wagons and sent to **Boulogne** in France; says there he met an Estonian man who would hit them

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for no reason; says there were a lot of young people; recalls how much guards would force them to work by digging into the ground, taking cables back; recalls when they were woken up one night and had to stand in one line, he thought they would be killed that night, but they were taken to the basement the guards were hitting them; says that fortunately he and his friend hid behind one of the basement doors; says there was Czechoslovakian guard who began speaking Polish with him [*Aleksandravičius*]; says the guard told them to flee after giving them cigarettes and a slice of bread; says the guard then led them to the main room with all the others; says that at that time the Romani began to sing, and the Germans and requested that they keep singing; says that afterwards they were all standing in one line and on their back Germans wrote "**Trawniki**"; notes that for the duration of his capture he had clothing to wear, but remembers some prisoners being half naked; they stayed for seven months at **Boling**; says the women were separated from the men, but they could meet and walk together to the work; says he was there with his whole family, except for his children, father-in-law, and his uncle's family, who were killed the day everyone was killed in the **Pravieniskes** barrack, and his mother in law, who was shot next to a tree while crying for her children.

[01:] 19:05:25 – [01:] 27:42:24  
19:48 – 28:40

Aleksandravičius remembers how women would watch them and guards were malicious to them; says that guards would tell them to run to work and that after work they were forced to run in circles while guards would stand with sticks and watch them; remembers that even if their boots fell off while running, they would still have to run bare footed; remembers one night when guards told them to walk; says the next morning he remembers Americans being there; recalls that while walking, a lot of prisoners were killed; says they were shot by guards; he says they walked through the apple tress like through the tunnels, apples were everywhere, if somebody would bend to pick an apple from the ground, he was immediately shot; says they were placed on a train to Russia and taken way; says they had to walk a long distance because the train did not get to the destination they were going; says they walked to a big town, **Treneris**; says that from there, they were taken to a concentration camp where were lots of prisoners; estimates there were maybe more than a thousand; remembers that he and others had to go chop up forest wood; recalls one day when cutting the trees by the stream, Russians were shooting from one side, and from the other side of the stream Americans were shooting back; says there were seven of them there and that no one was shot; recalls that some of the women survived the war and of that group of survivors, some of them even somewhere in Ukmergė; comments that his wife survived as well, but they did not stay together; recalls that they walked back to Lithuania; comments again about the shooting match between the Russians and the Americans; notes that the seven or so prisoners climbed up the hill and stayed there; says that at that time the Germans did not care about making sure the work was done once the shooting began; says that all of them decided to run away; says they started to walk down the road, but that all of the houses were empty, and that nobody was anywhere, but that sometimes they would find a potato to eat; says that once they reached the town, they were stopped by the Germans and were taken back to the concentration camp; says once they opened the door, all of the men were naked with the long beards down to their stomach; adds that before arrival, they found some clothes so they were dressed in uniform.

[01:] 27:42:25 – [01:] 36:24:25

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**28:41 – 37:50**

Aleksas comments how lucky they got, when in the evening Russian women came; Aleksas recalls that they were sick and had documents to go to the hospital somewhere in west; the ladies would show documents and they would get in anywhere; so the next morning they decided to go with them together; they came to **Maino** city; everybody is walking free in there; they found some clothes, and sweets; the head of the camp was a very nice German man, he let them do whatever they wanted, till one day he told them to go; Aleksandravičius recalls going to an old tunnel and waiting there; they stayed there maybe for a day; he remembers having some bread with them in the tunnel; after a day one of them got out seeing what was happening, and saw that Americans were already there; they all took them into the tents; lots of people, women, men; he thinks thousands were there; they stayed in those tents for about two months; the Germans were gone at that time; after that Americans took them by planes to **Gleibčikas** and gave them to Russians at **Gilba** town; he can't even describe how tough and scary Germans' cruelty was; he says it is very hard to tell and describe it also; he points out the hitting all the time, forced labor, carrying stones, and carrying these stones back after work; the work consisted of digging ground and tunnels; says that he had very little to eat at the concentration camps, but recalls that the quality of the food was acceptable.