

ŠKĻARS, Aleksandrs
Latvia Documentation Project
Russian
RG-50.568*0051

Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, Aleksandrs Škļars, born October 28, 1933, and a native of Daugavpils, a small town in present-day Latvia, talks about an execution of local Jews. This is an event he witnessed at the time of the Nazi occupation of his village during World War II.

[01:] 00:32:00 – [01:] 09:40:07
00:00 – 10:00

Škļars introduces himself; says that at the time of German occupation he lived in Daugavpils; says many Jews were friends of his family and that he was always in good relations with the local Jews; remembers a night toward the end of 1941: their Jewish neighbors (an entire family) were taken away and soon afterward their house and shop were looted by locals; discusses the railroads carrying Wehrmacht troops eastward, and headed west were captives and refugees [?]; says many (of the latter) did not survive the transport and their corpses were gathered at a small park in town and were eventually taken away; says that the German soldiers were not as stolid as they are often portrayed; says they would give the locals chocolate; describes a summer day in which he witnessed a large procession of the local Jews (more than 300 people) escorted by an armed convoy; says the soldiers wore Wehrmacht-like uniforms, but more plain; says that between the locals it was rumored that the Jews in the procession had to throw their jewelry away; says the procession went toward the **Stropski** Forest to a three-story brick building near the Golden Mountain; says that around 1 a.m., machine guns began firing and went through 5 a.m.; says later on that morning he went to the execution site because he wanted to find a jackknife; says there were many other locals looking for jewelry; remembers seeing a large pile of torn Soviet paper money.

[01:] 09:40:08 – [01:] 19:25:00
10:01 – 20:10

Škļars says his family had good relations with their Jewish neighbors; says his mother often purchased items in the neighbor's shop on credit; says his father also enjoyed the respect of Daugavpils Jews; returns to the procession discussed earlier; describes the convoy; tells that he was standing there about 20 meters from the procession; says that the Jews in the procession were of various ages; says that the people in the procession were carrying their belongings; says that some threw their jewelry; says one woman in the procession threw her jewelry and it was immediately picked up by a man standing on the roadside; says he does not remember if among the Jews in the procession were any he knew personally; says the machine guns did not begin to fire immediately after the procession was moved away which was around 3 p.m., but rather around 1 a.m. the next day and continued until 5 a.m.; remembers hearing the shots clearly because his house was standing within half a kilometer from the execution site; says that later in the morning the place was clear, except for the pile of torn Soviet bills; says that he was there with his neighbor **Dimka Kupriyanov** the next

morning; says that some people searching the site afterwards found a lot of gold and became rich; notes that his parents never looked for the gold or jewelery there; says he does not remember any of the convoy soldiers returning to the village after the execution took place, nor does he know if any of his acquaintances were executed; says he could not understand the language of the soldiers and that the soldiers were drunk.

**[01:] 19:25:01 – [01:] 22:07: 15
20:11 – 22:59**

After being asked on how big the mass grave at the execution place was, Škļars answers that there were several graves; says the clearing in the forest was about 60 by 80 meters; says he was there for about two hours, and after not finding what he wanted, went back home; says there were about 15 other people, mainly locals that he knew personally who were searching as well; says he talked with some of them, but nobody would tell him about what they found.