

BLAJ, Maria
Romania Documentation Project
Romanian
RG-50.573*0002

Box 1, Tape 1

In this interview, Maria Blaj, local resident of the village of Treznea, talks about her wartime experience with Hungarian troops who came to kill the local families and plundered their possessions. In addition, she comments on another incident from 1944 in which Nazi troops came to gather and deport the local Jewish families.

[01:] 00:42:15 – [01:] 10:35:59

She gives her birth date as July 15, 1930, and her birth place as Treznea (the village is in the northwestern part of Romania, only some 12 km away from Zalău); mentions that she used to live here with her parents and four brothers; comments on her being the only one still alive from her family; remembers the invasion by Hungarian troops on September 9, 1940; comments on her walking through the village and hiding in the house of a neighbor upon the arrival of the troops; remembers the woman discovering her and sending her home; discusses refusing to leave; remembers the Hungarian soldiers setting on fire the hemp people had gathered, and the houses; comments on the soldiers being covered in blood that was not their own; remembers the soldiers shooting the woman in whose house she was hiding, when the woman left the house and asked for it not to be set on fire; comments on her running to another neighbor and then trying to find her way home; discusses witnessing the soldiers beat local people who were hiding in their basements; remembers seeing the soldiers stab some people with their bayonets; talks about her being rounded up along with 30 other local children and taken to a pond nearby; mentions seeing four machine guns in front of them and being put in four rows; comments on two officers who came by car and asked the soldiers what they were doing with the people rounded-up; discusses the soldiers trying to justify their actions by stating that they wanted to shoot the villagers because they shot at them; remembers being taken by the neck by one officer who asked one of the soldiers whether it was that child who had shot at him or, pointing at an old man present there, whether it had been that old man; discusses the officer giving the order not to shoot anyone and telling the villagers to go home, reassuring them that they would not be shot; remembers seeing on her way home the soldiers who were heavily beating her father.

[01:] 10:36:00 – [01:] 17:39:59

She comments on her seeing dead bodies on her way home; discusses people being either shot or burnt; mentions seeing a Jewish convoy; remembers arriving at home and finding out that her mother and brothers had hidden in hay and maize; discusses a Hungarian man

coming to their house three days after these incidents and asking her parents to lend him the children to help him gather the dead bodies; discusses her father not agreeing and only giving him his donkeys as help; remembers going to the cemetery to see who the dead ones were and recognizing nine Jews whom she knew from the village; talks about hearing gun shots, and locals fleeing the village for fear the war would catch up to them; discusses her father being taken to a nearby school of which she does not remember the name; comments on her father being held there for three weeks along with other men; talks about not getting treatment for her father's wounds and his dying the same year during Christmas; comments on the reason why the soldiers came to their village as being the outcome of a rich man's plan who paid the soldiers to kill the locals so he could keep the land; comments on the burial of the victims.

[01:] 17:40:00 – [01:] 27:02:59

She remembers the Germans taking the Jews in 1944; says that very few got out and came back to the village after the war was over; comments on the Jews living in her village as kind, caring, and hard-working people; discusses the local Jews giving products on credit when the other villagers had no money; talks again about the invasion by the soldiers in 1940; says that their sleeves were pulled up and their hands were covered in blood; discusses witnessing the soldiers stab people with their bayonets; mentions that among those who were stabbed were her husband's grandmother and her father-in-law; comments on the situation in the village before the invasion of the Nazis and the deportation of the Jews in 1944; remembers people from Cluj coming to take her testimony on what had happened back then.

[01:] 27:03:00 – [01:] 30:01:59

She says that there are those who know what happened, but do not speak about what they saw, unless they are given money or other compensation, but she said it before and she will say it again if anybody will ask her; adds that she will only say what she knows and nothing embellished, besides she will not expect compensation for that.