E3 Escape from persecution



In 1941, fifteen-year-old Roma, Johann Baranyai, was deported from his place of work in Lower Austria to the so-called “Lackenbach Gypsy Camp”. There, he had to perform forced labour on road construction projects. In 1943, he and a friend fled across the nearby border to Hungary. Without papers, he secretly returned to the German Reich. In Germany, he found work in agriculture and later in a bakery. In order to avoid arrest, he volunteered for the German Wehrmacht’s armoured forces in 1944. After being seriously wounded at the front, he was eventually taken prisoner by the Soviets. In 1945, at the age of 19, he escaped from the military hospital and thus avoided deportation to Russia.

1910 1951

1941-45

Did you know

...that between 1939 and 1945, many people were only deported to concentration camps because they had been registered by the police or the municipal administration as members of a so-called “gypsy family” during the interwar period? In many instances, moving to another federal state saved them from persecution, as they were not registered as “gypsies” there.

Your task

Think about how to survive without the help of parents or relatives and without the use of identity documents.

About the photo

Johann Baranyai at the age of 18 as a soldier in the German Wehrmacht. d/ROM/a Special Series 03/15 Roma Service, A-7503 Kleinbachselten, Gartenstraße 3

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