



<p>Project: Pennylands Camp 22 - WW2 POW Camp. Respondent: Geronimo Donis. Year of Birth: 1940. Age: 76. Connection to project: Lived in Pennylands with family. Date of Interview: 18th May 2017. Interviewer: Kay McMeekin. Recording Agreement: Yes. Information & Content: Yes. Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 2). Length of Interview: 9:16. Location of Interview: Auchinleck, Ayrshire. Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro.</p>		
Time (from: mins/secs)	Time Coded Summary/Transcript	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00:00	Introduction, welcome and information about respondent.	0:0-0:43
	Q1. What is your connection to Pennylands?	
	A1. Connection was that my parents, my mum and dad had rented out a farm cottage at Orchardton Farm on the Cumnock to Ochiltree road and it was called Watson Cottage, it's now a ruin and we there then the farmer got a person to work on the farm and he gave him (dad) three months' notice to quit the cottage. So, the only place he could go to house his family was Pennylands Camp in Auchinleck and that's when we moved there about 1948.	0:46-1:28
	Q2. How big a family was it?	
	A2. Well, at that time it was myself, I was the eldest and then was Agnes, Basilia and then Margaret who was born there and that was the family at that time. So that was like four.	1:30-1:44
	Q3. Tell me about your father. He came from Santander (in Spain), is, that right?	
	A3. Yes Santander.	1:52-1:53
	Q4. What was the accommodation like compared to Watson Cottage?	
	A4. When we landed there, I remember it was a float, just a lorry with a hood on it, for taking ... they used to do flittings Above the cab of the lorry they had a recess and I remember all the stuff was transferred from the lorry into the Nissen hut	2:0-2:31

	and the lorry went away. Where's the frying pans? The frying pans were and some of the pans were up in this recess so they were short of frying pans and pots.	
	Q5. So, there was cooking facilities in the Nissen hut?	
	A5. It was a big stove. Aye	2:34-2:38
	Q6. Was it paraffin or something?	
	A6. No, no, they were wood or coal or whatever you could get. There was plenty, an abundance of wood there. What do you cry them? It was what the prisoners had. The chimney going up through the roof. That was your heating that was your cooking; you boiled water or cooked whatever you were cooking on that. What was it they cried it? A stove, just like a stove.	2:41-3:03
	Q7. Was there running water?	
	A7. You had to go to ... on the main drag there was a stand, a pump, you know, like the lion's head things like you used to get on the street, well they had some of them. You had to go and take a container and bring water in. There were no sink facilities; you had to, it was a basin, you know, I remember that because you had to go out in certain areas where the, what was known as a midden where people were taking their trash and things like that and they'd put it all out there so you had to go and throw this, if you washed dishes or that you'd to take it out. The job for a wee boy was to take it out and throw it there. There were toilets, there wash-blocks you could use. They were, a big bath you got washed in that.	3:05-3:54
	Q8. Was your father still working as a miner at this point?	
	A8. Yes, he was the bricklayer at the Whitehill pit. He was a bricklayer, he trained as a bricklayer.	3:57-4:02
	Q9. You moved there in 1948. I've got a map here. Can you mark where you think you stayed?	
	A9. That's the road coming down. Now, I think the warden's office was about here somewhere. We were about 3, 2 or 3 Nissen huts down from the warden's hut.	4:14-4:28
	Q10. Can mark roughly where you think it was?	
	A10. I think it was around about there, 2 or 3 huts down because what I had to do was to walk up by where we stayed	4:30-4:42

	to the warden's hut with the gun 'cause I had taken the gun off the boy.	
	Q11. Tell us the story about the gun!	
	A11. The Gun! What happened was in these days you made your own entertainment. So, Agnes and Basilia who were younger than me, we had a set pram wheels you could take the big Wilson Cross prams the springs came up like that and you put a board on it. What you did was - my two sisters got on the back of it and I was driving it. You could actually slew it round either way and I was going down and the next thing I saw this young chap near the bottom and he does this and then I see the wee puff of smoke. The bullet hit the wheel and burst it, so the bogie went off, threw us off. So, picked myself up and away down and we managed to get hold of the gun off him because he was in shock with what had happened himself, got a fright, so I took the gun off him, got my sisters, left the bogie walked up to the warden's office and handed in the gun and then that's how it was in the Daily Express. That's what happened.	4:44-5:47
	Q12. What was the lad's name?	
	A12. I can't mind his name. It is in there (the paper.) Whether that's right or no. He was older than me, I know that.	5:49-5:58
	Q13. Did the house have a number?	
	A13. I have no mind whether it had a number or not.	6:01-6:03
	Q14. You would walk to school at Auchinleck?	
	A14. Aye you went to Auchinleck then.	6:06-6:10
	Q15. Were there any shops?	
	A15. No, it was actually vans that came down if I can remember, grocery vans, things like that whether it was the Co-operative or not I can't remember. That was of no interest to me as long as I was getting food.	6:12-6:25
	Q16. What about sweets?	
	A16. I don't know. I've never actually been a sweetie eater	6:30-6:32
	Q17. Were there any gardens? Did you grow food there?	

	A17. We weren't that long there. I think we were only about 4 months because we had four of a family we got rehoused at Dalsalloch. It was only a transit camp families were coming and going all the time	6:36-6:48
	Q18. Did you have friends there? Do you remember the names of the other families?	
	A18. No, it was all just, the kids all played together. You had to play. They would go into some of the empty Nissen huts and it was plasterboard they would batter down the plasterboard and out would come bullets and there was a big, where you were excavating, there was a big tank full of water with a fence round it, and that was for if there was a fire in any of the huts they had to pump the water from that up to wherever the fire was.	6:51-7:25
	Q19. Was there somebody in charge? You talked about the Warden's office.	
	A19. The Warden, he was the man that controlled everything on the site. He was there, well, 24/7. The police were there quite regular. They made visits I remember that. And they walked down the police. There was no car. They walked down.	7:27-7:41
	Q20. Did you play in the camp and the woods?	
	A20. Aye, climbed trees, up in the huts, empty Nissen huts you rummaged through them. I was a good boy.	7:44-7:52
	Q21. Were you sorry to leave Pennylands?	
	A21. I don't know. When we moved from there it was once again get everything on to a float and up to 126 Dalsalloch Rows. That's where we moved to.	7:57-8:05
	Q22. What was the accommodation like there? Did it have running water?	
	A22. It had a washhouse and a toilet outside. Four houses. The coal house was out there the washhouse and the toilet. It wasn't an individual toilet, so many houses had that block.	8:09
	Q23. What do you think was the worst thing about Pennylands Camp?	
	A23. Well, getting shot! That was the biggest fright! Well for somebody of 8 years of age and that, there it was the parents that had to take the brunt of everything.	8:34-8:49
	Q24. What did you like most about it?	

	A24. Well it was fresh air, it was a challenge, it was something different, from the isolation of a farm cottage to all of a sudden being in with lots of people. It was an introduction to civilisation, as it were.	8:53-9:09
	Closing statement and end of interview.	9:16
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