

Anna Melnyk

Interviewer - Did a lot of people go there [to Russia] for bread?

AM - They didn't let them. It was forbidden. The Desna river was close, and people would cross it - the border to Russia. In Russia there was no similar Famine. In Chernihiv, in Sumy [oblasts] things were a bit better. Why? Because we're right beside Russia, so people crossed the river Desna, there was a forest, and they would try to get something [to eat] and would bring it back. They would cross the river clandestinely, into the Bryansk forests. They would cross through the Bryansk forests. If they were caught they sent them back and took away all their bread. Whatever the person got, they would take away. Even potatoes.

Every day they would ride around the village and look into homes. If there were [corpses] they threw them on the cart. They were paid for this; they had food - for bread, they would go around and [collect] the bodies and bury them. That land is covered in corpses. It's very hard to recall this. When I think about it, our youth went by in such difficult circumstances - what happened, it was awful.