

Excerpt from Oral History Interview with Heddy Shrooler

An immigrant from Poland, Heddy Shrooler was interviewed for the Cities of Destiny Oral History Project in Spring 1982 by CSUN students Fran Brumen and Trudy Stoltz. Shrooler was 21 years old when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, and spent much of the war as a forced laborer. In this clip she describes fleeing from Russian forces after they liberated Poland, being captured, forced to work, and raped before becoming pregnant and having an abortion.

Transcript:

HS: We got to go—we got to go then. We ran out on our own feet. We had to run away. Nobody told us where to go but, we run wherever we could go away from the Russian. And we came to Germany. And then, we run right into the war again. It was shooting from all over. And, the name was Kemnitz in Germany, a lot of very—they were shooting you in the middle. On one side were the Russians, on one side were the Germans. But on one side were American and England, they were—it was, we were so in the middle. And they shoot from over and over, and somehow we got alive. We didn't get killed. So, we worked on the farm again and from there we came back again. Then, this place that I was born in Mecklenburg in East Germany. And, from there on I worked for the Russian. And, I had—I got pregnant from the Russian.

FB: What'd you work for the Russian?

HS: For the Russian, they took me away from home.

FB: What did you do, when you worked for the Russian?

HS: Oh, worked with the cows.

TS: Farming stuff.

FB: Farming again?

HS: Farming again. We didn't farm. We had only cows. They picked up from all the rich people—farming cows—put them all together. And, we had to work. Couple girls. We had to milk them, we had to feed them, we had to do all, everything for them. Whenever they liked somebody, they took them to bed. And so, a couple girls, we had the chance. We had the—they took us to bed even if we didn't like it. So, and I, I, ah, a little later on I got abortion.

FB: How did you get an abortion in that time?

HS: Well, I run away from home. Run as far as I could.

TS: By yourself?

HS: By myself. And, I had abortion. I had already—I was already almost five month pregnant. I didn't want to have a Russian boy.

FB: Wow.

HS: It was a boy, the doctor told me. So, we had a lot of lies. They didn't want to take me in the hospital and I'd sneaked into the hospital from the other side—over the fence. I thought I had to do it. Either I got killed or whatever happens to me, doesn't matter. So anyway, I got in. They had to take me in.

FB: So you felt that strongly against the Russians that if you had to get killed to get rid of it, you would?

HS: Yes, that's it. I didn't want to have anybody. Not even this baby what I had. I love children, but not even this baby what I have in my body.