

Gizela Fudem With Her Husband Leon Fudem



This is a photo of me with Leon Fudem, my husband, taken shortly after we got married in 1948 in Bergen, a small town located next to the former Nazi camp Bergen-Belsen. I married my husband in Bergen. It was on 11th September 1947. We got married in the office, and I remember that my husband didn't understand German and didn't say anything. At some point I had to give him a sign so that he'd said 'Ja'. Some family members can't forgive us until this day that it wasn't a real Jewish wedding. But nobody was thinking about that back then. Bergen was a town a few kilometers away from the camp. And that was the only contact with Germans we had then. We had everything else in the camp. There were also some trading contacts. We used to get coffee, which was unattainable to Germans. Germans drink a lot of coffee, and they were selling up, some of them completely, for coffee. I remember I bought an old sewing machine in Hamburg that I still have even today. We stayed at the camp until 1948, and then decided to go back to Poland. Everyone was advising us against it. But I wanted to study more, and I thought it would only be possible in Poland. Besides, I was very much attached to the language and couldn't really imagine living anywhere else. In Poland first we went to Wroclaw, because I already knew then that two younger brothers of my mother, Rafael and Mozes, had survived. They stayed in Russia during the war, and later came to Wroclaw. And we came with a box in which I had all my belongings, and that old Singer sewing machine, and I had an ax which I brought as well. I remember Mom's Brothers laughed at me when they saw the box, because they thought I brought some treasures from Germany, but in reality there were just my shabby things in there. Later I went to Lodz to look for the rest of the family. And I got there exactly when my cousin Sara Lea and her husband were ready to leave for Israel. I managed to see her then. I decided to stay in Wroclaw then. It was still 1948, and after some two months of being in Poland I took university entry exams, humanities then, because I thought I'd study English, and I thought I'd like that. But later it turned out I preferred science and moved to the polytechnic where I got a degree in civic engineering, a

bachelor's and a master's degree. In the meantime I began working at the construction mechanics faculty, I worked there as an assistant for nine years. And later I moved to a design office, where I worked until my retirement.