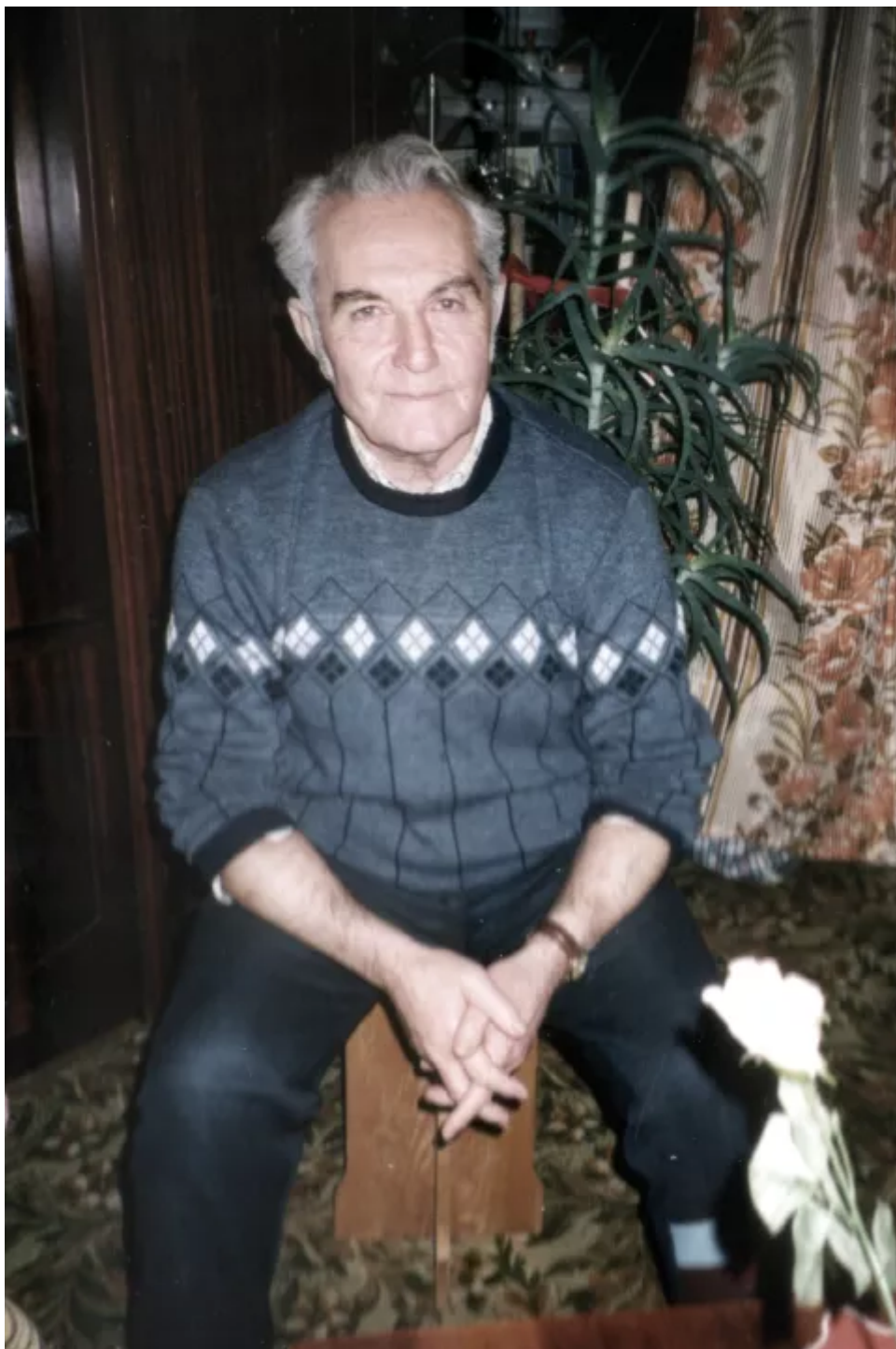


Tibor Gohman



This is me, Tibor Gohman, at home in Uzhhorod. There is a camp number on my left arm. This photo was taken in Uzhhorod in 2003 after the interview.

In 1955 I became a driver. I worked as a driver for the rest of my life. In 1987 I retired.

I've come to religion unexpectedly. I grew up in a fairly religious family. I wasn't taught Jewish traditions or holidays. After World War II I became an atheist like the majority of population in the USSR. And, frankly speaking, I didn't feel any need in religion. My brother Miklos died in 1990.

Miklos's wife Fiera notified me about the funeral and asked me to recite the Kaddish for my brother, but I didn't know anything about it. I told my friend about it. I knew that he attended a synagogue. He offered me to go to the synagogue with him. I went with him for the first time and since then I've attended the synagogue regularly. I am a pensioner and have time to socialize with people - why not? When I worked I didn't have free time. I was on trips days and nights. So I had no time for going out and I didn't feel like it. Now it has become a need for me. In the evening I think: tomorrow I will go to the synagogue. In 1990 I became a Jewish religious community in Uzhhorod. I was elected deputy chairman of the community few years. It's hard for me to go to the synagogue in the evening. I have poor sight. We get together 4 times a week. Every Friday we celebrate Sabbath at the synagogue. We get together in the evening, light candles and recite a prayer. When there is anniversary of some of our relatives' death we recite the Kiddush. After the prayer somebody does Broche, blessing over the challah bread and wine. I have a busy day on Friday. Everything needs to be ready: coffee on the tables after a prayer, sweets, challah bread, 50 grams of vodka each. And on Saturday there have to be treatments after a prayer. We always celebrate Jewish holidays according to the rules and traditions. I do not celebrate holidays at home, we have better arrangements in the community. The wife goes to such events.

In 1999 Hesed, Jewish charity fund, was established in Uzhhorod. I take part in its activities. It is a very good and much needed organization. It provides assistance to the needy. Now many people envy Jews, especially old people. It's hard to imagine how older people could survive, if it were not for Hesed. They provide food products and deliver meals to the elderly, provide medications and medical assistance. They also take care of the little ones. Hesed helps people of all ages, children and old people, to learn about Jewish religion, traditions, history and study the languages. There are dancing, choir and theatrical clubs, there is a computer school and everybody can find what's interesting for him. There are also pastime clubs for older people. The most terrible thing about old age is loneliness and lack of communication. They can watch a movie, listen to a lecture or talk to their acquaintances having a cup of tea or coffee and find new friends in Hesed. I work in the social commission of Hesed. My life is full thanks to Hesed and community. I have no time for feeling old and I know that I am doing important and necessary work.