

Freida Usatinskaya And Froim Usatinskiy



This is a picture of my parents Freida Usatinskaya (nee Pivchik) and Froim Usatinskiy photographed near the house that they had bought in Makeevka in 1940.

In 1940 my parents sold our apartment and bought a house. It was a modest house, but there was a kitchen garden and a garden close to it. There was electricity in the house, but there was no gas and we stoked the stove with coal. The toilet was in the yard, but this was so common in Makeevka that we didn't consider it a discomfort. There was also a radio in the house. We often listened to concerts and literary readings in the evening. Shortly before the war we got a record player and I was very fond of listening to records. I liked Soviet songs such as 'How spacious is my country', 'March of enthusiasts', etc.

We heard about the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on the radio. There were crowds of people near street radios at noon of 22nd June 1941 listening to the frightening words by Molotov about the beginning of the war.

My parents, my younger brother and I packed, ready to evacuate. My mother made rucksacks from pillowcases for us into which we put our underwear, clothes, a few textbooks and our favorite books. There were air raids and a curfew was introduced in the town. My father made a shelter in the yard where we were hiding during air raids. We only managed to leave in October 1941. Our distant relative, the one that once helped my father and brother to find a job in Makeevka, helped us to evacuate. He worked at a large metallurgical plant and we managed to evacuate to the Ural with this plant. We traveled in a freight train with a stove in our railcar. We had food to last two weeks, at the maximum. We didn't believe we would be gone for long. We didn't have many essential things. We didn't have cups or all the necessary clothes. At stations we sometimes got some cereal or soup. Our fellow travelers even managed to cook some food on the stove. It was good that we had enough dried bread. During air raids on our way the train stopped and we scattered around. For some reason I was scared most about seeing dead horses in the fields. I was very afraid from then on.

Makeevka was liberated at the end of 1943 and we began to pack to go home. I left with my parents and brother.