

## Tilda Galpert With Her Family



This is our family photo. From left to right, in the first row are: my brother Aron Akerman, my mother Helena Akerman, my sister Margarita Weiss (nee Akerman) holding her son, Alexandr Weiss. In the second row are I and my brother Samuel Akerman. The photo was taken in Mukachevo in 1939. In April 1939 I became a worker at the factory of my uncle Rot, Aunt Perl's husband. This factory manufactured stationery: notebooks, accounting books, packages, etc. I worked at this factory for five years until April 1944 when the Germans came. My brother Aron worked at the glass polishing shop of my mother's brother Yankel. After finishing commercial academy my brother Fulop was a teacher in the village of Zagatiye in Mukachevo district. Samuel studied at school. In 1942 the Hungarians began to take young men into forced labor battalions to support the front. My brothers David and Hugo were recruited to a labor battalion. They perished in 1942. We know that David perished somewhere in Ukraine, but we have no information about where Hugo died. Aron, who was a worker in Uncle Yankel's shop, decided to escape to the USSR in 1942. He crossed the border and the Soviet border officials arrested him for illegal crossing of the border. He was sent to the Gulag. They didn't care that he was a Jew escaping from the fascists. Aron perished in the Gulag in 1943. In April 1944 all the Jews of Mukachevo were taken to the ghetto. We didn't have to move since our street formed the center of the two ghettos organized in Mukachevo because there were so many Jews. My older sister Margarita and her son, who was nine years old, happened to be in the other ghetto. We couldn't communicate since both ghettos were fenced and there was patrol watching the fence. My mother, my younger brother Shmil and I stayed in our house. We didn't know that our three brothers had perished. My sister Szerena was in Moscow and my brother Fulop was in England. After some time we heard rumors that we were going to be taken to a concentration camp. We traveled in an overcrowded train for about a week. We didn't get any food on the way. This happened in April 1944. When we came to the concentration camp we didn't know what kind of place it was. Later I got to know that this was Auschwitz. In Auschwitz my mother and I got separated. I hugged my mother and said, 'I'll see you soon!'. We were not meant to see each other ever again. My mother perished in the gas chamber

in Auschwitz on the day of our arrival. I saw my brother Samuel in the concentration camp when we were going to the washing facility. The boys were standing in a separate group and he was shouting something to me. I replied that we would talk later. I thought that our family would get together - we didn't know what kind of place this was. We didn't know it was a death camp. We thought it was a labor camp. This was the last time I saw Samuel. He died from diarrhea caused by hunger. My sister Margarita also perished. She was young and strong and could have survived. The Germans didn't exterminate those that could work, but she was there with her son, and the children were sent to the gas chamber immediately. She probably didn't want to leave her son behind - of course she didn't, she was his mother and she went there with him.