

Tilda And Ari Galpert



This is a picture my future husband, Ari Galpert and me, taken in Mukachevo in 1943 during the German occupation. All Jews were ordered to wear yellow stars on their clothes. I met my future husband Ernest Galpert at the factory where I worked. We call him Ari. His Jewish name is Aron. Ari was born in Mukachevo in 1923. We are the same age. His father, Ishiya Galpert, was a Hasid. He owned a food store in Mukachevo. Ari's mother's name was Perl [nee Kalush]. She was a housewife and helped her husband in the store. There were three children in the family: Ari had a younger and an older sister. He studied in cheder and in a Czech secondary school. After finishing school he became an apprentice to a joiner. When the Hungarians came to power the owner of this shop had

to transfer it to somebody else and Ari lost his job. In 1941 he became a mechanic at the Rot factory. We became friends in 1943. We were 20. This was the time of the German occupation. Ari visited me at home and I went to see him in his home. Our families were religious. Ari and I met after work every day. We went for a walk. At that time we were required to wear yellow stars on our clothes. We decided to be together, but this was no time to think about life arrangements. We decided to wait and see how the situation would develop. In April 1944 Rot's factory where I worked was closed. 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. After some time we heard rumors that we were going to be taken to a concentration camp. Then we were told to prepare some food and clothes to take with us. Then all inmates were ordered to come to the territory of the brick factory. We spent I don't know how many days in the open air on the factory territory. From there we were taken to the railway station and went to Auschwitz by train. 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. We stayed in Auschwitz for three months, three months of hard exhausting work and hunger. This was a very hard period. I can't bring back these memories again. When I arrived in Mukachevo after the war I met my friend Frida's friend Voita. He had been in a forced labor battalion in Austria with Ari. They returned to Mukachevo together. When they returned to Mukachevo there were no Jews back from the concentration camps yet, and Ari volunteered to the Soviet army. He said he wanted a revenge for what the fascists had done. He went to the army in April 1945 not knowing that the war was going to be over soon. When the war was over he couldn't be demobilized since he came of age for mandatory service in the army. Subcarpathia became a part of the USSR and Ari was subject to service in the army as a Soviet citizen. I waited for him for three years: one year in the camp and two years after the war. He was demobilized in March 1947.