

## Ernest Galpert With His Future Wife Tilda And Friends



This is a picture of me and my friends, taken in Mukachevo in 1944. From top to bottom: my wife's friend Frieda, my future wife Tilda Galpert, nee Akerman, I, and Rota, our colleague at the stationery factory. At that time Hungarian authorities ordered Jews to wear yellow marks on the chest. A week later they were replaced with yellow stars. We didn't know yet that the majority of

the Jewish population of Mukachevo would be sent into concentration camps. In 1938 the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia and gave the former Hungarian territory including Subcarpathia back to Hungarians. [Editor's note: The Germans only occupied the Czech lands, Slovakia became an independent state but that part of it, which was mostly populated by Hungarians, was in fact ceded to Hungary in accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938.] In the course of time it became clear that this was a fascist Hungary and the authorities began to introduce anti-Jewish laws. My master lost the license for his shop. In 1940 his shop was closed. I had to look for a job. I went to work at Mr. Rot's stationery factory, which was still operating at the time. I became a mechanic. At Mr. Rot's factory I met my future wife, Tilda Akerman. She was called Toby then. Tilda and I were the same age. She came from Mukachevo. She told me that we studied together at elementary school, but I ignored her. Tilda worked at the factory. There were other girls there, too. When something went wrong with the equipment they called me to fix the problem. That's how I met Tilda. We had Jewish friends. Tilda's friend Frieda and my friend Voita worked at the factory. Frieda and Voita were going to get married when World War II was over. Tilda and I also fell in love with one another. If it hadn't been for the war we would have got married, but because of the war we didn't know what was going to happen to us. In April 1944 I was taken to forced labor to Hungary. Tilda and I didn't know what was ahead of us. We agreed that we would keep in touch through my father's sister, who lived in Switzerland. Tilda and I were destined to meet again. She returned to Mukachevo when I was at service. In 1944 Tilda and her family were sent to Auschwitz where younger Jews were sent to work and older Jews and children were exterminated. The Germans needed workforce. Tilda's family perished in Auschwitz. Tilda and her friend Frieda were sent to a work camp in the town of Reichenbach from Auschwitz. My sisters Olga and Toby were there, too. This camp was located near a military plant of radio equipment. The inmates of the camp assembled radio equipment. Tilda and my sisters were in this camp until they were liberated. My sisters told Tilda that my relatives had perished in Auschwitz. After they were liberated from the camp Tilda and her friend Frieda went to Mukachevo.