

Galina Levina With Her Friends



This is my photo, taken in the late 1950s, before my marriage. It was taken in one of the parks in Leningrad. Here you can see me together with my friends, maybe boyfriends, but I don't remember their names.

In 1954, my mother died. So we stayed, the three of us: a completely sick Grandpa – lying in bed and not walking – Granny, who never worked in her life, and I. So my Granddad was lying in bed for nine years, sick and blind. Everyone told me, and the doctors too, ‘You have to take him to the home for the handicapped, the house of invalids,’ they promised me to help with it, and they asked me, ‘Why do you want to keep him, you are a little girl, what a horror to have this ill person!’ But I said ‘no.’

I started to work in the steel-rolling factory, in the instrument department, where I worked my entire life. First I was an assistant to the master, and then I became an engineer-technologist, later I got a constructor position. I spent my entire life in the rolling shop; I didn't want to leave for the research institute, even though they offered it to me hundreds of times. I thought the rolling shop was something alive. I had wonderful relations with everybody, although my colleagues were very simple people, they could curse with rude words and so on. Anyway, they were representatives of the real working class, not like today. After all, the instrumental rolling shop is always the elite. One of the workers told me once: ‘So, I went to the impressionism exhibition and looked at all those Degas dancers. And what? There are fat blue women standing, nothing else. That is no good, it doesn't make any sense.’ So, we discussed this topic. But as a matter of fact they took care of me; they liked to have something extraordinary like me.