

Ruth Strazh



This is me, wearing our family relic on my neck. This is the gold medal that my grandfather Yakov Brodowski received for his successes at the Moscow University. On the right side of the medal the engraving says 'Year 1884' and 'Yakov Brodowski?' along the circle edge. On the underside is the tsarist coat of arms and the inscription 'Moscow State University.' My granddaughter Angelina in America has this medal now and she will give it to her children as a memory of their background. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1984. My husband and I were released from exile in 1956. After we returned my husband and I went to work at the mechanical factory. We worked in shifts, and sometimes these were night shifts. We tried to work the same shifts. Later my husband went to study, and then he started advancing at work. When he became a shop superintendent, he only

had to work regular hours while I continued working in shifts. It also happened that Yakov left for work, when I had just returned home. My husband wanted me to find another job that would be more suitable for us. My relatives helped me to find a job as a commodity expert, but it involved business trips all over the Soviet Union to purchase goods. I knew this would affect my family and my son and declined this offer. Then I was offered a job at the same commodity stocks storage. I had to choose between jewelry and souvenirs. I was concerned about work with jewelry, gold and diamonds. One had to be honest, but one also depended on others, and then it involved responsibility, if something went wrong. So I decided for the position of an accounting clerk at the souvenirs' department. Later I worked at a steel storage. When a new hotel opened in Tallinn, I went to work there as a room maid. I worked 24 hours and then had three days off. It was difficult work. I already received a pension and I decided it was my time to retire finally. I finally retired at 62. My husband and I lived together 37 years. He was promoted to chief engineer and then factory deputy director. It was hard work, and it was strenuous. He had three heart attacks. He died after he had the third heart attack. My mother-in-law died in 1980, and Yakov died in 1983, three weeks before his 60th birthday. We made a restaurant reservation and had cards printed out. It was a sudden death. Yakov and his mother were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Tallinn. My mama died in 1985, two years after my husband's death.