

Meishe Ushpits



This is my husband Meishe Ushpits in a Vorkuta camp. The picture was taken in the early 1950s. I met my future husband in 1954. His name was Meishe Ushpits. He was born in Sakiai in 1914. Meishe's family was rich, but the life of the young man was not easy. Meishe's mother died young and he was raised by his step-mother and father. When he was an adolescent, he left for Klaipeda, where he worked at a plant. Then Meishe moved to Kaunas, where he saw the beginning of the war. Meishe and his sister Leya didn't manage to get evacuated and they became ghetto prisoners.

Meishe's father perished in occupation in Sakiai. Leya and Meishe had to spend horrible years in the ghetto, but fortunately they survived. When Kaunas was liberated by the Soviet troops, one of the former ghetto turnkeys informed against Meishe that he allegedly gave away the hideout of some children, and Meishe was arrested. He was sentenced to 15 years in the camps and became a prisoner of a Stalin's camp in Vorkuta. Many ghetto prisoners protested against such a ruling of the court and told how Meishe helped them during the occupation, but his verdict remained unchanged. Meishe spent eleven years in the camps. He was a kind and outgoing person and even in a Stalin's camp he was treated very well. At first he worked in a mine, where the conditions were inhuman. Meishe managed to get into a course for driving electric trolleys. Right after that he drove coal and other cargoes. Meishe was released from the camp by amnesty after Stalin's death. In 1956 Meishe was fully rehabilitated.