

Sophia Vollerner



This is a picture of me, taken after my husband and I moved to Gorlovka from Kiev, where we had our job assignments, in 1934. I entered the Faculty of Economics of Kiev Trade Economic Institute in 1928. I met my future husband Alexandr Andrieskiy, born in 1905, at the institute. We studied in one group. We got married after graduation in 1931. I kept the last name of my father in marriage. My husband was Ukrainian and my parents were against this marriage: it wasn't Alexandr they were against, but that I married a man of a different religion. Especially my mother was against our union. She said she would understand me, if he was an aristocrat or a very rich man. But I married a villager. She also kept telling me that all relatives might think that she treated me so badly that I hurried into marriage with the first man who crossed my way, only to escape from her. There were

many tears, disputes and arguments. When I told my parents that I loved Alexandr and wasn't going to turn him down my parents terminated their relationship with me. Alexandr and I had a civil ceremony at the registry office and I went to live with my husband. I left my parents' home with a small suitcase. My parents didn't give me any books or clothing and my father said to me that I would be back home anyway after the divorce. It took some time to improve our relationship with my parents. I wrote them greeting cards on family and Jewish holidays. For almost two years my letters returned unopened to me before my parents began to respond. I corresponded with my brother regularly. In 1932 my husband was in Kiev and went to see my parents. They were very arrogant at first: they wouldn't have let him in had it not been too rude. When they got to know him better they changed their attitude and realized that he was a decent man. From then on my parents treated us like their beloved children. My husband and I got a job assignment in Gorlovka, Donetsk region, 500 kilometers from Kiev. We stayed in different hostels until we got a room in a two-bedroom apartment. Only after our son was born we received a two-bedroom apartment. I worked at the Mechanics of Donetsk cooperative and my husband worked at a mine. I went to work at a bank in 1932. My parents were very happy when their grandson was born in Gorlovka in 1933. We named him Rostislav. I had maternity leave for two months before I had to go back to work. My mother-in-law came to us after Rostislav was born. My husband hired a housemaid and my mother-in-law looked after Rostislav. She stayed with us until 1937. She was a reliable and loving grandmother to our son.