

## Valentina Gohman With Natalia And Victor Gohman



My wife Valentina Gohman (nee Novikova) with daughter Natalia (on the right) and son Victor. I had this photograph taken in a photo shop in Vladivostok on my son's fifth birthday in 1961. I sent one photo to my brother Miklos in Uzhhorod.

In autumn 1948 I received notification to make my appearance at the registry office where they announced that I was recruited to the Soviet army. All recruits were taken to Byelorussia where they were forming a military unit and from there we moved to Khabarovsk in the Far East, in 7000 km from home. In Khabarovsk I had some training and then was assigned to the Pacific Ocean Navy. I met my wife to be when I was in the army. Valentina Novikova studied in the Electric

Engineering Technical School in Vladivostok. I occasionally took a leave and went to town with my fellow comrades. We went for walks or to dancing events. Once we went to dance in Valentina's school where I met her. We spent a whole evening together talking and dancing and decided to meet again on my next leave. Valentina was born in Leningrad 1928. Her mother died at childbirth. Valentina's father was a professional military and moved from one place to another, so he didn't have an opportunity to raise his daughter. He left Valentina with her grandmother in Novosibirsk. She raised Valentina. Her father perished at the front. Valentina was Russian, but nationality never mattered to me. It didn't matter to her that I was a Jew. That we loved each other was important to us. We were both orphans and cared about our future family and children. I married Valentina in 1953, when I served in the army. We didn't have money and we couldn't afford a wedding party. We registered our marriage in a registry office and in the evening I received a 3-day leave that we spent together at Valentina's home and then I returned to my military unit.

In 1954 I demobilized from the army. My wife finished her college and moved to her grandmother in Novosibirsk. I arrived there after demobilization. When I arrived, all I had included kersey boots, my military shirt and overcoat. My wife and I could only rely on ourselves. There was to be no help from somebody else. I went to work as a car mechanic at an equipment yard and later I became a driver there. I worked as a driver for the rest of my life. Our daughter Natalia was born in 1955 and son Victor - in 1956. Valentina quit her job after our children were born. She was a housewife and took care of the children. Of course, we didn't celebrate Jewish holidays at home. We celebrated Soviet holidays: 1 May, 7 November, Victory Day, Soviet army Day and New Year.