

Gherda Kagan In Evacuation



This is me, Gherda Kagan, in evacuation. This photo was made in Andizhan (Uzbekistan) in 1943. I don't remember the cause why it was taken but it is my only photo during the war-time. During Great Patriotic War my parents and I and grandmother Esphir evacuated to Bazorkino village in 20 km from Ordzhonikidze in Northern Ossetia where my father became chief engineer of the tinned food factory. There was a sovkhos growing vegetables for this factory and there was a steppe around. We also had a vegetable garden and I took to liking gardening then. My mother worked at the tinned food factory. She checked the quality and identified the cost of vegetable shipments. I didn't go to school. My mother was afraid of letting me out of the house. There were rumors that Chechens kidnapped Russian children. My mother taught me the curriculum of the third grade at home. In summer 1942, when Germans were advancing to the Caucasus we evacuated along the Military Georgian Highway to Tbilisi on trucks. From Tbilisi we moved on to Tashkent. There my father met his colleagues from Odessa and they convinced him to go to a tinned food factory in Andizhan. In Andizhan [3 500 from Odessa in Uzbekistan] I finally went to school. My classmates were mainly children of evacuated families. One of them was Glukhov, an overgrown boy four years older than me, a very annoying albino boy with white hair and red eyes. He beat me so hard for my being a Jew that I decided for myself, being only 11 years old: I should marry a Russian man so that my children didn't suffer as much as I did. Schoolchildren went perform concerts in hospitals and also gathered clothes for them. I saw many severely wounded maimed people and since then there is nothing more fearful than a war for me.