

Rachil Lemberg With Her Husband Yevgeni Stepanov



This is our family photograph: me and my husband Yevgeni Stepanov. This photo was taken in Odessa, USSR, in 1946.

I returned from Uzbekistan, where I was in evacuation to Ananiev in 1945. I returned from Uzbekistan, where I was in evacuation to Ananiev in 1945. Our house wasn't ruined and there were no other tenants in it. My neighbors told me what happened with my family after I left Ananiev in 1941. Then Germans came to the town. They established a Jewish ghetto in Zheltkovo station in 15 km from Ananiev. My mother and father were taken to the ghetto, they were killed in the ghetto among other Jews. I don't even know where their grave is. I lived in Ananiev several days. Our Russian neighbor Maria Stepanova, my childhood friend Yevgeni's mother, took me to their home. Yevgeni was at the front during the war and after the war he stayed to serve in Germany. I couldn't stay in the house where I spent my childhood years and where everything breathed with the memories of my family. I decided to leave. I didn't care where I went. All I wished was to go elsewhere. I didn't take anything from my home.

I had Jewish and non-Jewish friends in childhood. There was a family of Stepanovs few houses away from where we lived. Anisim Stepanov, the father of the family, worked as a shop assistant and Maria Stepanova, the mother, was a housewife. They had two sons: Sergey, born in 1923, and Yevgeni, born in 1919. Yevgeni and I became friends when we were children. We played together and I felt a part of the family in their home. I often had lunch with them. When I turned 13 she began to call me their daughter-in-law. She said she wanted us to get married when we grew up. Of course, this only made me laugh at the time.

Then I moved to Odessa. I received my college record book from Tashkent. I needed it to continue my studies in the Construction College. However, I was admitted to the second semester of the third year in college in 1946 while in Tashkent I was a 4-year student. I missed a lot and such was

their decision. I rented a room. My share of the money I received for selling our house lasted for half a year of my life in Odessa. Food was very expensive after the war and the only place one could buy food products was at the market. A slice of bread cost 10 rubles.

In 1946 my childhood friend Yevgeni Stepanov found me in Odessa. He was still on service in a town in the Eastern Germany. There was a housing area for Soviet military. It was a nice cozy town called Galle. It stood on the Zalle River (Galle-under-Zalle). He wrote me long tender letters every day. Our correspondence lasted half a year. In summer Yevgeni came on leave and registered our marriage in a registry office. He came on a 45-day leave and then he had to go back to Germany. He sent me money. In 1947, after my fourth year in college was over I went to visit my husband. He lived in a 3-bedroom apartment with his comrade fellow family. They occupied two rooms and Yevgeni lived in the third room. I have very pleasant memories about four months I spent with my husband in this town. In autumn I returned to college in Odessa. In 1948 after finishing the college I received a job assignment to Bolekhov village in Ivano-Frankovsk region, 550 km from Kiev, in Western Ukraine. My husband submitted a report for transfer to the military unit in Bolekhov. His report was approved. We received a room in Bolekhov and I went to work as superintendent at a construction site. In 1949 our son Anatoli was born. We lived there 3 years until in 1952 my husband was transferred to Lvov. He went there, but since he didn't receive an apartment my son and I stayed in Bolekhov where my daughter Yelena was born in 1955. In Lvov my husband served until 1956. Yevgeni was a wonderful caring husband and a good father. After he moved to Lvov I didn't work. After he received a two-bedroom apartment in Lvov we all moved to Lvov. I was a housewife. In 1956 my husband got a transfer to Uzhhorod in Subcarpathia.