

Asia Matveyuk



I, Asia Leikind, photographed on a warm day in spring in Kherson in 1939.

In my young years I had Jewish, Ukrainian and German friends. I joined Komsomol. We liked parades on Soviet holidays. We celebrated 7 November and 1 May at home. In our village was a new club building constructed in the center of the village where young people from the whole colony got together in the evening to dance and socialize. The people were joyful and the village looked revived. Many young people from our colony were studying in colleges in Odessa, Nikolaev and Kherson. They came to the village on vacation that summer. We danced, listened to the radio and watched movies.

In summer 1934 I finished school and my parents sent me to my mother's sisters in Lugansk to continue my education. I was drawn to medicine since childhood and I could watch pharmacists making medications in the pharmacy across the street from our house for hours. I entered a Medical School in Lugansk. I lived in a hostel. After finishing my school I got a job assignment to Nikolaev I left Lugansk. I went to work as a pharmacist and also worked part-as an attendant in the hospital to earn more money. I lived with my distant relatives on my grandmother's side. I dwelled behind a curtain in the kitchen and was dreaming of getting a room of my own. To stay away from this corner I often worked night shifts in the pharmacy and studied. In 1939 I entered the extramural department of Pharmaceutical College and became subject to military service like all other medical employees. I had exams twice a year and received all excellent marks for my studies. In 1939 I was appointed director of the pharmacy in Peresadovka village of Nikolaev region. I rented a room from a local Jewish family.