Haya Slobodianskaya With Her Friends

My sister Haya Slobodianskaya with her friends before departure to Makeevka. The photo was taken in Poyana in 1940.

My older sister Haya, who had turned 18 by that time, went to work in Makeevka, Donetsk region. She wrote us letters. She was working at the construction in mines. It was very hard work and there were no comforts in their living quarters, but young people were enthusiastic about their work anyway. Some of them, even young men, tried to escape, but they were imprisoned if captured.

Throughout the wAR we had no information about Haya. My mother continuously wrote letters to evacuation agencies, but Haya wasn't registered in any of them. We believed our sister to be dead, but our mother said she was sure that Haya was alive. My mother died in 1958, some time before we finally heard from Haya.

It turned out that Haya was captured by Germans at the beginning of the war. She said she was Ukrainian and they let her go. She came to Poyany after we had left. Our neighbors, a Romanian family, took her to Romania as a niece of theirs. She lived all these years with a different name in Romania.

She married a German man, born in Romania and resident of Romania. He knew that Haya was Jewish, but it was no problem for him. They had two sons. In the 1950s my sister and her family moved to Germany. My sister didn't face any anti-Semitism living in Germany after the Great Patriotic War. Her husband died there and my sister and her sons still reside in Düsseldorf. Her sons are electronic engineers.