

Certificate Of Sarah Fichgendler



This certificate was issued to my mother, Sarah Fichgendler, on 2nd August 1941 by the military commander of Voznesensk town of Nikolaev region. It states that my mother is to evacuate with her mother Ester and daughter Bella. The commander wrote in his handwriting a direction to take us onto the ship.

In summer 1941 Germany attacked the USSR. We knew that the Germans were killing Jews and many Jews were leaving Kishinev. Only those who had illusions regarding Germans and Romanians were staying. The sovkhos where my father was working provided horse-drawn wagons to Jews. My father was told we were expected in a sovkhos in Kakhovka district, Kherson region. My mother, my father, Grandmother Ester and I left in the direction of Dubossary. We left the key to our apartment on the shelf by the door, as usual. We didn't think we would be gone for long. We reached the town of Kriulyany on the Dniestr. The bridge across the river was destroyed and the army troops were making a bridge of boats before nighttime. There were many people and equipment on the bank. The army troops were the first to pass. At dawn the bridge was removed for the day. Our turn was on the third night.

We moved to the East for two weeks. We stopped to take a rest in the town of Voznesensk. My parents had a discussion and decided that my father would go to the sovkhos in Kherson region, and my mother, grandmother and I would go to Uncle Max in Moscow. My father left on the sovkhos wagon. My mother wasn't feeling well and needed some medications. The owners of the house, where we were staying, told me the way to the pharmacy in the main street. Round the corner there was a steep descent to a bridge across the Bug River. I looked at the bridge, bought the medication and went back. On the next day the front advanced so much that we had to take a prompt leave. The owners of the house were evacuating with their office and couldn't take us with them. My mother ran about the town the whole day, trying to obtain a permit to board the ship with a hospital on it. She finally got one, but the chief of the hospital said, 'I can take you and your daughter and you will work for us, but I cannot take the old lady - we shall need this place for a patient.' My mother refused to go - we couldn't really leave my grandmother.

An evening and then night fell. Demolition bombs began to be dropped on Voznesensk. We left the house and were walking along the central street without knowing where to. There was a truck with some soldiers moving in the opposite direction to where we were going. The driver asked us from the cabin: 'Where is a bridge?' How fortunate that I knew where the bridge was! 'Take us with you and I will show you the way!' They pulled Grandmother in by her hands and my mother and I got in. Near the pharmacy I pointed to the right. We crossed the bridge and drove up the steep bank, when we heard an explosion. We turned back and saw the bridge burning.