

Raisa Roitman



This is a picture of me, Raisa Roitman, when I was still single. It was taken in Tashkent in 1944. I sent this picture to my husband-to-be Nahman Roitman in Buguruslan.

In June 1941, I passed final exams for the eighth grade and was supposed to go back home on vacation, but I stayed in Rezina for a couple of days as I didn't want to part with Nahman. At 12am on 22nd June we found out about the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War from Molotov's speech. That was the last time I saw Nahman before leaving for evacuation. On 16th July my parents decided to leave, right after Kishinev was occupied. So, our big family left the household for nowhere.

In spite of working hard, I finished school with honors in 1943. Father sent me some money. He insisted on my continuing my studies. I went to the town of Osh, located at the border of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Rostov University was evacuated there. I submitted my documents and was enrolled without taking any exams, because I was an excellent student. I entered the Chemical Agents Department. I settled in the hostel. A new stage in my life began. I became a student. I had studied at Rostov University only for two months. In late October there was a terrible explosion in the laboratory of our university and a couple of our students died, many students were evacuated with severe scalds. I didn't tell my mother about it, but Mother had a hunch that something had happened. Mother came to Osh, and having found out that I had remained alive by a miracle, insisted on my leaving the institute. I always listened to my mother and left Osh, in spite of liking my studies and having friends there.

I was transferred to the Tashkent Medical Institute, where I studied until 1944. I have never regretted that, because I understood that medicine was my calling. There, in Tashkent I made friends with Jewish girls from Moldova, with whom I lived in the hostel. Gradually our life was getting better. I received an increased stipend and was paid for knitting, so I had the opportunity to send some money to my mother.