

Efim Finkel



It is me, Efim Finkel. The photo was made for the Board of Honor of veterans of the Great Patriotic War in Hesel, in Chernovtsy in 1998. After perestroika began in 1980s our life became a lot worse, almost unbearable. Perestroika brought many positive changes: we understood that we could talk freely about what we were afraid even to think about - repression during the Stalin's time, extermination of Jews and a lot more. There were books published and performances staged in theaters. Jewish life and culture were restored, but there were negative things, too. It became easier for young people to improve their life, but older people became impoverished. We were thinking of emigration in 1980s, but my wife became ill and we had to give up this idea. I didn't feel strong enough to start life from anew. Besides, we didn't have enough money to pay all expenses. And we stayed here. I retired in 1983 when I reached the age of retirement. I was an invalid after my cranial injury and it was hard for me to work. My wife fell ill and was confined to bed. I looked after her. Olga died in 1991. In 1992 when a Jewish community was established in Chernovtsy I met my second wife there. Galina Maslakova is Russian. She is very different from my first wife. Her first husband Anchil Plunt was a Jew from Bukovina. He was 20 years older than Galina. They lived together for over 30 years. Her husband was very religious and observed all traditions. After they got married Galina learned all rules of the Jewish way of life and followed them willingly. She speaks fluent Yiddish. Galina's husband died in 1970s, but Galina continued to observe Jewish traditions. She celebrated Jewish holidays and Sabbath and studied Hebrew in Hesel. We got married in 1993. Thanks to Galina I returned to the Jewish way of life. We attend clubs and

meetings and celebrations of Sabbath in Hesed. I am a member of the club of veterans of the Great Patriotic War in Hesed. We celebrate Jewish holidays at home. At Pesach Galina makes traditional Jewish food. Swhe has special kitchen utensils for Pesach. Galina follows the kashrut. She and I fast at Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. When I was able to walk we used to celebrate Shabbat and Jewish holidays in Hesed and went to synagogue, but that's not possible now. My wife and I often talk Yiddish, although I am more used to speaking Russian. Galina is a very kind and nice person. She takes care of me and I don't feel old with her. We live in Galina's apartment. I gave my apartment to my granddaughter. I hope she will get married soon and I will see my great grandchild. Hesed provides assistance to us. We receive food packages and medications and I have a doctor available at Hesed. My life is coming to an end and assistance from Hesed and my wife's love and care make my life easier and nicer.