

Bluma Katz



This is me photographed in the recreation center of Kuyalnik, Odessa, for the memory of my vacation. This photo was taken in 1957.

In 1946 I went to teach at the agricultural courses in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I worked there for a year. I got along well with my colleagues and students. I faced no anti-Semitism. I got married in 1949. Our neighbor had a relative in Chernovtsy, regional town of Bukovina [650 km from Kiev] who was single. She told me about him. When he visited her, she introduced him to me. Somehow the wedding arrangements were expedited and I didn't even have time to learn more about my husband. Later I understood why his family was in such hurry. I don't want to talk about this period of my life. I don't even want to pronounce the name of my first husband. He turned out to be mentally retarded, but nobody ever mentioned this to me before the wedding. We had a short civil ceremony in the registry office, a small dinner party for the closest relatives in the evening and left for Chernovtsy. Chernovtsy seemed a real European town to me. It was a very cozy and clean town with wide streets. Chernovtsy was a Jewish town: before the war the Jewish population constituted about 60% of the total population. There were fewer left after the war: some perished and the others moved to Romania and Palestine. However, many Jews stayed: they spoke Yiddish in the streets, synagogues operated and there was a Jewish Theater. I went to all performances. I liked the surrounding of reserved, polite and well-dressed people. I went to work as an agronomist to the kolkhoz in Novoselitsy village near Chernovtsy. Commuted to work by bus. My husband and I lived several years together being absolute strangers to one another. I divorced him and the management of the kolkhoz submitted a solicitation to the executive committee for providing

lodging to me. I received a small room in a shared apartment. I was happy to have a place to live.

I worked in Novoselitsy until 1959. Then I got an offer of the position of a scientific employee in the All-Union scientific research institute of potato farming, its affiliate in Chernovtsy, where I worked in the department of potato farming till 1983. The institute had its experimental fields where I spent much time. Farming is hard work, but I liked my job. I didn't face any anti-Semitism. I got along well with my colleagues. We were like a family. We celebrated Soviet holidays and birthdays together. My colleagues were my friends and my family. I always spent my vacations in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I stayed with my mother and saw my brother, sister and school friends every day.