

Rosa Vexler With Her Son Grigory Vexler And Husband Oscar Vexler



My family, from left to right: I, Rosa Vexler, nee Abramson; my son Grigory Vexler and my husband Oscar Vexler. Photo made on the eve of Rosh HaShana in Chernovtsy, 1963.

In 1951 our son Gersh (Grigory) was born. My grandfather and my husband's father had this name. Circumcision was not allowed at that time, but my husband said that he would only acknowledge his son after he was circumcised. There was no synagogue in Luzhany. My husband brought a circumcision specialist from Chernovtsy. My husband's friends came and made a meal. This action was to be kept a secret from neighbors. I felt sorry for the baby - he was only 8 days old. But my husband said that our son was to be a real Jew and insisted on doing it.

Our son studied at the secondary and music schools. His music teacher told us that he had a talent for music. My son always took part in academic concerts and was one of the best pupils. Music was his life and he never got tired of practicing. This was the period when anti-Semitism was felt already in 1960s. We were told that our son couldn't enter the music college in Chernovtsy because he was a Jew. He was invited to the music college in Ternopol. He went to study there. Of course, this created some problems for us. We had to pay his rent, buy him music instruments and give him money for food. My husband said that he would go to any lengths to help his son get education. Every month I went to Ternopol bringing him food and cooking. My husband and I denied ourselves in many things. We were happy that our son would be able to dedicate himself to the profession that he loved. After our son finished the college he went to the army. He served in a military orchestra. After demobilization he entered the Conservatory in Kiev. We were so happy. Our son graduated from the Conservatory in 1979. I thought he would get a job with an orchestra. But my son loved music and children and he decided to dedicate himself to teaching other children what he learned.