

Faina Volper With Her Husband Yuri Milrud



I, Faina Volper, and my husband Yuri Milrud. Photo made in Chernovtsy in December 1947 before our older son Alexei was born.

I went to work at a bank in Starokonstantinov in 1946. I was an apprentice there for a week and then I began to work as an accountant. I worked there a year and then I met my future husband. Yuri Milrud was born in Ostropol village not far from Starokonstantinov in 1921. His Jewish name was Usher. Yuri finished school and entered Leningrad aviation institute in 1939. He studied two months before their group was sent to the aviation school in Kachinsk. After he finished this school the war began. He was sent to the tank school in Gorky and from there - to the Karelian and then - to Byelorussian front. He came as far as Berlin during the war. He was shell-shocked and had many military awards.

From Berlin Yuri was sent to work in Chernovtsy. He came to see his relatives in Starokonstantinov. We met and he proposed to me in three days. I gave my consent. My father was against my marriage. He thought that there was no man worthy of me. We had a civil wedding ceremony in Starokonstantinov and moved to Chernovtsy in 1947. I didn't change my last name to my husband's. I knew how unhappy my father was that he didn't have a son to keep the name of the family. His son died in infantry and my sister and I kept our family name after we got married. My husband and I had poor Yiddish and so we spoke Russian.

My husband received two rooms in a 4-room apartment. He entered the Faculty of History at the University and graduated from it in a year and a half passing all exams externally. Upon graduation my husband worked as a teacher at a school for boys in Chernovtsy. He was a communist and was soon appointed director of the school.

I was admitted to the Medical Institute in Chernovtsy, but I was pregnant already. I withdrew my documents from the Medical Institute and entered the Physics and Mathematic Faculty of Pedagogical Institute to study there by correspondence. I went to Starokonstantinov to have my baby born where my mother was. Our first baby was born in Starokonstantinov on 29 January 1948. He was named Alexei. When he was three months old we returned to Chernovtsy. I studied at the Institute by for a year and went to the Philology Faculty at the University on the 2nd year. I could get a better education at the University. I didn't have to attend lectures. Studying by correspondence was more convenient. I took exams twice a year and spent the rest of the time with my son. On 29 December 1950 our second son Sergey was born.

My husband and I celebrated all Jewish holidays, even though I grew up an atheist. School propaganda had its impact on my outlooks. However, my mother inspired love of Jewish traditions in me and I understand that it is my identity. My husband never cared about traditions, though. I don't think he grew up in a religious family. The environment where a person grows is very important, I think. My husband didn't mind my observing Jewish traditions. I fasted at Yom Kippur and we celebrated Pesach at home. Of course, we didn't follow all rules. I didn't have special utensils for Pesach and we had bread at home. But on the first 2 or 3 days we only had matzah. After my mother died I began to buy matzah at the local synagogue. We also celebrated Soviet holidays. We had good friends - a Jewish family and always enjoyed having a good time with them. We got together on holidays to sing and dance and play games. We also celebrated New Year with them. We went skiing and had lots of fun.