

Yevgenia Kozak 's Brother Semyon Shafer



My brother Semyon Shafer. This photo was taken in the late 1960s in Orsk. He sent it to our parents for the memory. On 22 June 1941 at noon our neighbors came to our home to listen to the radio - we bought it shortly before the war. Molotov announced that the Great Patriotic War began. On 22 July the first bombs fell on Bershad. The next day mama, papa, my brother Shloime (we addressed him Semyon and he adopted this name, when obtaining a passport) and sister Lubov and I left Bershad. Our trip took a month before we arrived in Ossetia in Northern Caucasus. The train stopped near Ordzhonikidze, Azerbaijan, and we were sent to a kolkhoz, in a village near Ordzhonikidze. We were given a warm welcome there. We were accommodated in a small room with a kitchen. A family from Kharkiv resided in the next-door room. Mama, my brother and I went to work in the field and my father went to work as a janitor in the kolkhoz granary. We received food products for work and in winter the kolkhoz provided wood for heating. In summer 1942 fascists approached the Northern Caucasus and we had to move on. The kolkhoz gave us a bull-driven wagon where we loaded our miserable belongings. We bid farewell to the locals and moved on walking behind the wagon. We reached Makhachkala [today capital of Dagestan republic within Russian Federation] and from there we crossed the Caspian Sea with thousands of other escapees. We arrived in Uzbekistan and were accommodated near Andijon. Life was very hard. Mama and I went to work at the factory manufacturing cotton ropes. My brother left and didn't tell us where he was going. He just ran away from home with a bag of dried bread and we didn't hear from him for ten years. All of a sudden my brother arrived in 1952. My brother told us that he worked in mines in Donetsk region. He was grown up and independent. He was well-dressed and brought us gifts. My brother didn't stay long. There was no job for him in the town. He went to Orenburg region in Russia. He married Galina, a Tatar girl. He just informed our parents after the wedding fearing that they might be against his marrying a non-Jewish girl. My parents felt hurt, but they didn't show it. My brother lived in Orsk and had his own life. He could hardly make ends meet himself. Semyon

does not write me. I know he has two sons, whom I've never seen and cannot remember their names. He has grandchildren, too.