

Evgenia Gendler's Husband Lev Gendler



My husband Lev Gendler after finishing school. This photo was taken in Kiev in 1937. I met my future husband in 1942 in Sverdlovsk, where I was in evacuation. The plant where I worked was sponsoring a hospital where my future husband junior lieutenant of medical service Lev Gendler worked. Lev was born in a Jewish family in Kiev in 1920. He studied in Kiev Forestry Engineering College. At the beginning of the War the College evacuated to Sverdlovsk where Lev finished his studies and went to the front. He was shell-shocked and had to go to hospital. After the hospital he couldn't go back to the front since there was something wrong with his movement coordination function. He finished a military medical school with all excellent marks. When Lev was in hospital our plant invited all patients to dancing. My sister dragged me to this party. I was a shy girl and did not attend events like that. Lev invited me to dance with him. He didn't impress me much. I didn't

even think about love. I thought love was for a peaceful time and was quite out of place at wartimes. He invited me to the theater and then became to visit us at home. Finally he proposed to me. I was 18. I didn't say anything in response. In April 1945 Lev went to his parents in Kiev, but promised that he would be back for me. On 31st December 1945 I received a telegram from Lev. He notified me that he was arriving. He came when we were sitting down to have a New Year dinner. Lev said he had come for me. His parents received an apartment in Kiev. He told them that he was bringing home the girl he loved. We had a civil marriage in Sverdlovsk. We received food in our factory canteen for 3 days in advance: bread, soup and cereal and this made our wedding dinner. After the civil ceremony we ran home and had dinner with my sister and mother. Next day we left for Kiev. My husband's parents were born in a village near Kiev. His father's name was Froim Gendler and his mother's name was Sarra. After they got married they moved to Kiev. Lev's father went to work as a turner at the Bolshevik Plant [the biggest military plant in Kiev] and his mother was a housewife. Lev's younger brother Usher was in Air Force troops in the front. He was a flight-engineer, was wounded and had awards. After the war he got married and went to live with his wife. Usher worked at the Bolshevik Plant. He died from cancer when he was young. There were two rooms and a kitchen in Lev's family's apartment. My husband and I lived in one room. Lev's parents were religious. They celebrated Sabbath and Jewish holidays. On holidays his mother and father went to synagogue. They had matzah at Pesach and fasted at Yom Kippur. My husband and I were not religious. Lev began to work as an engineer in the Ministry of Furniture Industry. My father-in-law helped me to get a job as human resource inspector at the Bolshevik Plant.