

## Bluma Katz With Her Mother Golda Katz And Aunt Haya



This photo was taken during my vacation in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. From left to right: I my mother's younger sister Haya, my mother Golda Katz. This photo was taken in 1952.

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.

My mother observed Jewish traditions after the war. My sister, y brother or I did not observe traditions at our homes, but we celebrated Jewish holidays with mama and occasionally got together to celebrate Sabbath on Friday evening. In 1976 my mother fell severely ill, her heart condition grew worse. My sister and her family looked after her. My mother died in 1977. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. Before she died mama asked us to bury her according to the Jewish tradition and we fulfilled her will. Older Jews, who knew all rules made all necessary arrangements. There was a rabbi from the prayer house at the funeral.