

Tsylia Liatun's Mother Sarah-Maria Kats



My mother Sarah-Maria Kats. The photo was taken in the town of Igarka in 1951.

On 14 June 1941 my mother and I were deported to Siberia, by Soviet authorities. My mother didn't speak from the moment we parted with my sister and father at the railway station in Riga. She didn't eat or sleep. She only moaned quietly. I was afraid she was losing her mind. My mother was 55 then, but she turned into an old and sick woman. During 14 years of exile we were moved to other locations 13 times. I cannot even list all areas where we lived. There was a taiga around, there were rivers in the taiga and we moved from one location to another with our miserable belongings. We were always guarded, but I couldn't understand why. There was no place to run. My mother and I always identified ourselves as Jews, but observing of traditions in exile was out of the question. We were on the edge of survival. We did say the 'Shma Israel' prayer even at the worst times. In 1948 we were taken to Igarka town to work at a timber facility. My mother was 64 already and she didn't work any more.