

Mina Smolianskaya With Her Second Husband Aron Shtempler



My second husband Aron Shtempler and I. We are at home after we moved to Chernovtsy. The picture on the wall is of my mother's house. This photo was made Chernovtsy, 1946.

I met Aron Shtempler, a Jewish man and my 2nd husband in Karaganda. He was born to a poor Jewish family with many children in 1917. In 1940 when the Soviet power was established in Bukovina he went to work at a mine in Karaganda. His parents perished during the war, but his brothers survived. When we got acquainted Aron spoke poor Russian. People in Radauty spoke Rumanian before 1940 and his family spoke Yiddish at home. We also spoke Yiddish with him at the beginning and then gradually his Russian improved. There were not many Jewish women there and he began to date me. Soon we got married. We had a civil ceremony. My husband lived in a hostel and I moved in with him. There were no comforts whatsoever in this hostel. There was one toilet and one gas stove for 50 families and we washed ourselves in a bowl in our room. My husband broke his arm at work and received a certificate of invalidity for one year. Our first son Victor was born in this hostel in 1945. We were homesick and decided to move to Chernovtsy, where my husband's older brother lived. When we arrived at Chernovtsy my husband told me to wait for him at the railway station while he went to look for his brothers.

Their neighbor told him that they had left for Rumania on the last train. They had sent invitation for us to join them there, but we didn't receive it. We didn't even have a place to stay overnight. My husband found an abandoned attic with no windows. There were bare walls and bugs there. It was cold and empty. My husband and I picked some wood and made a fire to warm it up a little. We had some savings that we spent to accommodate this attic for a living. In 1946 our 2nd son Efim was born.

My husband was a skilled tailor. He studied in Bucharest before the war. He made men's and women's clothes. The only problem was that tailors did not receive money regularly. Only when an order was ready their clients paid them. Sometimes we didn't have money at all. We leased a part of our dwelling to have additional income. When our children went to school I went to work at the button factory. I was working with the button press that I had to pull. There were corns on my palms - it was hard work. I earned 360 rubles per month. I had to make 16 thousand buttons per

shift. It was a challenging job.