

Vladimir Olgart With His Fiancée Betia Chornaya



My fiancée Betia Chornaya and I on the bank of the Dnepr River. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1936 a month before our wedding. In the beginning I stayed with my sister Riva and her husband. I met Betia in Kiev. She was born in Skvira in 1912. Our families knew each other. Betia's father died at a young age, and her mother raised all the children; I believe there were eight of them. Betia finished lower secondary school in Skvira and decided to move to Kiev. She lived with Riva and worked as a secretary at the plant. We dated for a short time and then decided to get married. We didn't have a wedding party. We had a civil registration ceremony, and that was it. I got a job in a big barber's shop. We rented a room in Podol. We lived there for a short while until I bought a small house in Irpen, on the outskirts of Kiev. I had some savings from Moscow. We moved to Irpen in 1937. My wife worked as a secretary at the Irpen town council, and I continued working in Kiev. Commuting to Kiev and back home was a problem. There were no buses or local trains that made commuting very comfortable. I got to work via long-distance trains. I didn't want to lose a good job. We spoke Russian in our family. We identified ourselves as Soviet people. In 1937 our daughter Mara was born. My wife quit her job and dedicated herself to raising our child. I wanted to move to Kiev so much and finally got the opportunity. My colleague and I obtained permission to build an annex to a small two-storied building in a suburban street in Kiev. Each family had two small rooms and a kitchen in this annex. Water and toilet were in the yard. This could hardly be called a dwelling at all, but many families lived that way at the time; it was the usual thing. We moved to this annex in 1938.