

Yevgenia Kozak With Her Husband Meyer Kozak



This is the only photo of my husband Meyer Kozak and me taken shortly after we got married in 1953. Once in 1952 mama's old acquaintance offered to introduce me to her distant relative. The next day he visited us and told us his story at tea. Meyer Kozak was born in Odessa in 1915. His ancestors came from Bessarabia, and Meyer knew Romanian since childhood. Before the war Meyer was a worker. During the war he was an interpreter for Romanians, who were Hitler's allies. After the war he was sentenced to 10 years in Stalin's camps of the Gulag, as a military criminal. He was kept in Magadan in the north. After he was released he moved to Bershad where he had distant relatives. Meyer swore on his honor that he was not a traitor and had never been involved in any action against Jews and that he just worked as an interpreter in the town office of Odessa to save his life. I believed him - I liked Meyer. Besides, if he had been guilty he redeemed his fault. We got married in 1953: we just signed under our names in the registry office. We didn't even have rings. Meyer worked at the furniture factory and earned well. We lived with my parents: my mama and papa treated him very well. Life was getting better and I even thought that my fortune smiled at me, but it happened to be an illusion. On 11 February 1954 my son was born. We named him Alexey. Shortly afterward I got pregnant again. As for Meyer, he fell severely ill: this was an impact of 10 years of hard work in the north. When I was pregnant 5 months, Meyer died from tuberculosis in hospital in Odessa. I was struck with grief. Mama and I went to the funeral. My husband was buried in the hospital cemetery. On our way back my son got severely injured - his hand was squeezed by the door. He burst into tears and I finally started crying. Now I knew I alone had to raise our children. My second child was born in late 1955. I named him Mikhail after his father Meyer. My parents helped me to raise the children. In 1958 I went to the town committee to ask them to help me with employment. My boys were with me. They gave me a job of a janitor and

then I became a worker in the dyeing shop where I worked till I retired.