

Pass Issued To Rachel Randvee In 1945



This pass was issued to me by the NKVD office in Alma-Ata in June 1945. It enabled me to return to Tallinn after evacuation. When World War II began, my sister Riva and I decided to evacuate because our father was in Russia and we hoped to find him. With much effort we managed to reach Ulyanovsk, where we met the Kozlovski family; my sister's husband Yakov arrived after some time. We stayed in Ulyanovsk for about one year, and, when the front line approached the Volga, we went on to Kazakhstan. It was winter time and I fell ill during the journey; I had pneumonia and a very high fever. At some station, where we had to change trains, we weren't allowed into the station building - people were concerned that I had typhus. I lay resting on our suitcases out on the platform. Then my sister and her husband took me to a first-aid post. The doctor looked at me and said that I wouldn't make it through another day. My sister started crying but her husband told the doctor, 'We will pay you good money if you can just save the girl.' When he heard this the doctor found a medicine called sulfidin; we had to pay 10,000 rubles for ten tablets. That was a lot of money. My sister went to the station and sold her and our mother's golden rings to buy the medicine. Those ten tablets saved my life. In Kazakhstan we settled in a small place called Talgar, near Alma-Ata. Now it is a town. I went to school there. Before the war started I had finished six years of school in Tallinn but I spoke very little Russian so I had to do year six again. In the summer of 1945 we returned to Tallinn after evacuation. I arrived barefoot since my only pair of shoes fell apart on the way, and I had a nightgown with a waistband on instead of a dress. I had no other clothes.