

Bluma Katz



This is my latest photograph. This is me photographed for my passport. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 2004.

In 1948 I went to work as an agronomist to the kolkhoz in Novoselitsy village near Chernovtsy. I worked in Novoselitsy until 1959. Then I got an offer of the position of a scientific employee in the All-Union scientific research institute of potato farming, its affiliate in Chernovtsy, where I worked in the department of potato farming till 1983. The institute had its experimental fields where I spent much time. Farming is hard work, but I liked my job. I didn't face any anti-Semitism. I got along well with my colleagues. We were like a family. We celebrated Soviet holidays and birthdays together. My colleagues were my friends and my family. I always spent my vacations in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I stayed with my mother and saw my brother, sister and school friends every day.

I met my husband Lev Gershenzon, when I was on vacation in Mogilyov- Podolskiy in 1981. He was a teacher of chemistry at an evening school. I returned to Chernovtsy. Lev and I corresponded. When I came to Mogilyov on another vacation we got married. We were not young any more and we didn't have a wedding party. We registered our marriage and had a small dinner in the evening. Our guests were my sister and her husband and my husband's few friends. I exchanged my room in Chernovtsy for lodging in Mogilyov-Podolskiy, and moved there in 1983. In Mogilyov-Podolskiy I went to work as a lab assistant at the quality assurance laboratory of the agricultural machine building plant and from there I retired in 1993. We didn't celebrated Jewish holidays. We celebrated Soviet holidays at home: 1 May, 7 November Soviet army Day, Victory Day, and New Year. We had guests at home and visited friends. My husband's friends were his colleagues from school. His

former students who remembered their teacher came to see him. Lev worked at school till 2002. He had turned over his retirement age, but he did not want to quit his job. In 2002 a car hit my husband. He had a craniocerebral trauma and he could work no longer.

A synagogue and a Sunday Jewish school for children opened in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1990s. When Hesed and the Jewish community started their activities, our life started improving. Hesed and the Jewish community help us to survive. Hesed provides food packages and the necessary medications. There are visiting nurses helping older people about the house. This is a great support and I don't know how we could live without it. There are many Jewish newspapers and magazines issues. I read many of them and learn many interesting things from them. I used to take part in community life. There were good concerts of Jewish music and dances. People got together to celebrate Sabbath and Jewish holidays. Presently I cannot leave my husband for a long time and I cannot attend those events, but we can always have the care and attention we need.