

LYDIA GEKHTER  
RG-50.405.0020. (recorded 1990 Chicago)

Lydia was born in 1922 in Chernigov, Ukraine. Her father was a civil servant with the KGB. There were no Jewish holidays celebrated in her home and no Yiddish spoken. It was considered dangerous to be Jewish. Her childhood was a happy one and they lived in their own home.

Lydia was evacuated from Pryluky in Ukraine to Kazakhstan during WWII. She met her husband, Raphael in Frunze while she was working as a nurse in a hospital. He was a doctor, originally from Minsk, who had been wounded. He had been serving as a doctor near the Manchurian border. They were married in 1944 and had one child, Vladimir, in 1950.

After the war they went back to Minsk and Lydia studied to be a dentist. She couldn't find work there after graduation so went to Chichitov, near Lake Baikal. They returned to Minsk in 1968, but her husband was already suffering from cancer and died in 1970.

Lydia thinks glasnost made things worse. She moved to Chicago with her son and family and likes the life here.