

Yoino Ostrover



This is a picture of my father Yoino Ostrover. The photo was taken in Kosov in the late 1930s. This is the only picture of my father that I happen to have. When my father was 22 he went to the small town of Bobrka on business. Ant there he met this 17-year old Jewish girl who worked as a nanny for a wealthy Ukrainian family: my mother. She was very pretty and my father liked her a lot. My father knew that his mother would never give her consent to this marriage since the girl came from a poor family and had no dowry. My father kept visiting her in secret. He arranged for a wedding to be conducted by a local rabbi. He needed money for the wedding, which he took from his mother without telling her. My parents had a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah. When my father brought his wife home his mother just said, 'You've married her - now live with her where you want and how you want'. She disinherited her son and never again took any interest in him and his family. In 1894 my mother and father settled down in the village of Pistyn near Kosov, 150

kilometers from Lvov. My father worked at the wood cutting facility that became a factory on a later date in the town of Sniatyn, 20 kilometers from Pistyn, where he rented an apartment with other workers. Shortly after I was born World War I began and my father was recruited to the army. He had his payes cut. He was a horn player in the troops of the Dual Monarchy. I remember my father coming back home from the war in 1917. went back to work at the wood cutting factory. In the 1930s Zionist activists from Palestine arrived and tried to convince my parents to move there. I said to my father, 'Let's go there - why sit here?', but he replied 'No, I can't go there since I have no profession and there are no jobs for laborers there'. My father wasn't young any longer while they needed young employees in Palestine. I learned about what happened to my parents after I returned to Pristyn from evacuation in 1945. Our Ukrainian neighbors told us the sad story. When Romanian troops came to the village some local Ukrainian villagers began to rob and abuse their Jewish neighbors Even Romanians came to protect Jews from abuse. In September 1941 the Germans came to the village. On 16-17 October 1941 they captured almost half of the Jewish community of the village to take them to execution in the vicinity of the village. Our father, mother and Idlei hid in the cellar. A 'bukharka' - slang for 'drunkard' - Galia, a local Ukrainian, saw them and began to shout, calling the Germans to 'come here immediately: there is a 'zhydivka' hiding'. The Germans pulled my mother outside by her hair and my father by his beard. Idlei was running after them yelling in Yiddish, 'Don't touch my mother or I will kill you', but the Germans only laughed at him. When they reached the shooting ground the Germans forced my father to bury those Jews that had been shot there. I'm still terrified to think what my father must have felt while burying his Jewish neighbors and acquaintances. Then the Germans put my father, mother and handicapped Idlei into a gas chamber truck and left the truck somewhere. When they were dead, their bodies were thrown out some place - nobody knows where.