

Zoya Lerman's Father, Naum Lerman



My father, Naum Lerman, in a photo taken in Kiev in 1926, when he was 16. There were two sisters and five brothers in the Lerman family and my father was the youngest child. Boris Lerman, my father's father, died and my father's mother disappeared. Nobody knew what happened to her. David, born in 1902, was the oldest. Their second son was Michael, born in 1904. Then came Semyon, born in 1906, and Jacob, born in 1908. My father Naum, born in 1910, was the youngest. I don't remember their sisters' dates of birth. I never met my father's sisters and know them only from what my father told me. When my father was 13 or 14 years old, the children lost their parents. At that time David, the older brother, lived in Baku. He had a job as a tailor and he took

my father to live with him. Later, my father went to some trade school (I don't know exactly what kind of school). All five brothers were educated, but I can't give you a more detailed description. In the late 1920's all five brothers were living in Kiev and I know more about their life at this period. I don't know how or where my parents met. They married in 1932 in a civil registration ceremony. I don't know where my father worked before the war. Soon after their wedding, my father was summoned to serve in the army. I believe he served in Petersburg. My mother went there on the weekends because she missed him so much. My father wrote poems and dedicated them to my mother. He also painted very well when he was young. During WWII my father and his brothers, except for Uncle David who was beyond recruitment age, went to the front. I remember the beginning of the Great Patriotic War well. It started at night. My parents woke me up. I saw my father sitting on the sofa ready to put on his high boots. I asked him 'Papa, where are you going?' but he smiled and didn't say a word. He only said, 'You will be taken to the basement.' In the next building the basements were very deep and Uncle Syoma carried me there. My father had already left.