

Rasia Margolina And Khaskel Margolin



This is a picture of my stepmother Rasia Margolina and my father Khaskel Margolin. The photo was taken in Brovary, Kiev region, after they got married in 1925. I can vaguely remember my mother. When I was a bit over three years old she died at childbirth. This happened on 6th April 1924. The baby was stillborn. They were both buried in the Jewish cemetery in Sumy. I was taken to Cherna, my father's mother. I lived with my grandmother for a whole year without seeing my father. Nobody told me that my mother had died and I kept crying asking them to take me to my mother. A year passed and then my father's sister Nenia took me to my father, who lived in Brovary, in the suburbs of Kiev. Nenia told me that I would have a new mother. That way I found out that my father had remarried. His second wife's name was Rasia. I don't remember her maiden name. Rasia was much younger than my father. She was born in 1902. Later I got to know that my grandmother Cherna, who was Rasia's mother's distant relative, arranged for them to meet. My father and Rasia had a Jewish wedding. Brovary was a small provincial town and there was no synagogue there. My father and Rasia had their wedding in the synagogue on Schekavitskaya Street in Podol, Kiev. They settled down in the big two-storied brick house of Rasia's parents. There were ten rooms in the house. There was a stove for heating the house. There was no running water and the water was fetched from a well in the street. There was a small backyard with two apple trees, and a toilet made from planks. Rasia had four sisters and two brothers. The brothers were married and lived with their families elsewhere. The sisters were single. They lived in their parents' house. We had two rooms: one bigger room with a table, a wardrobe, two armchairs, a sofa where I slept and a smaller room that served as my father and Rasia's bedroom. We lived from hand-to-mouth. My father was an accountant at the district consumer union, but he probably earned very little there. My stepmother had to go to work. She worked for a shop making gloves. She took work home. She had a sewing machine and she made these gloves working from morning till night. It was hard work and she rubbed her hands sore with that rough cloth. Neither my father nor stepmother had time to spend with me. My brother Boris was born in 1926. His Jewish name was Boruch. He was named after my grandfather, who was killed by bandits. My younger brother, Shaya, named after my father's younger brother, who was also killed, was born in 1928. Even after my brothers were born my stepmother still had to go to work. My father became rather sickly and often missed work. My

stepmother actually was the breadwinner in the family.