

Frieda Portnaya's Father Anatoliy Mikhailovich Waldman



This is my father Anatoliy Mikhailovich Waldman in his Polish Army uniform. The photo was taken when he was in captivity in Ukraine around 1919. My father was born in Lodz, Poland in 1899. He was fair-haired and didn't look like a typical Jew. He came from a very poor family. My father was captured when he was in the Polish Army fighting against the Red Army. He stayed in Russia and got to Kiev somehow. He got a job as a sailor at the Dnipro Fleet in Kiev and met my mother there. My parents got married in 1921. They didn't have a real wedding. They just registered their marriage and started their life together. They bought an apartment in a house in Podol. In 1923 my older brother Mikhail was born, and I was born in 1928. My mother continued to work as a dressmaker and also taught my father to sew. He became a very good tailor ? he learned to make trousers. He worked at a tailor shop. His own relatives had stayed in Poland, where they had a very difficult life. My father used to send parcels there while it was allowed. In 1932 my father's cousin Wolf came to Kiev illegally. In 1937 my father's other brother came from Poland. It was a surprise for us when he came. He only stayed a few days, then the police came for him and his children and sent him to the North. My father never found out what had happened to them. Later another

cousin, David, came. My father took him to the town of Belaya Tserkov. His cousin lived there until the beginning of the war. He visited us every Saturday, and my mother did his laundry and cooked delicious food. She felt very sorry for him. In 1939, when the fascists entered Poland and the persecution of Jews began, my father's sister Manya Mordkovich and her husband and son came to us. Every time his relatives from Poland arrived, our divisional policeman showed up as if from nowhere. I think our neighbors reported on the relatives. My father paid the fines and took his relatives 100 km away from Kiev. With the outbreak of World War II, my father was called up to the army in 1941. He was 44, and the age limit was 45. Just after the War, somebody told us that our neighbors had seen father in 1941 near Lubny. He told them that he was going back to Kiev to find out what happened to us. Then somebody told us another story. They said that when my uncle Pinia and his family were being sent to Babi Yar, they were accompanied by a blond man. All her life my mother believed that this was my father. We were notified by the recruitment office that my father was missing. We still don't know for sure what happened to him.