

Naum Tseitlin With His Elder Sister, Sofia Tseitlin



This photo was taken in 1913 in Saratov, where we lived then. Sofia, or Sonya, my elder sister is eight here, and I am just five.

My parents moved to Saratov in 1898, before they had children. Both my sister and I were born in Saratov. I had two younger brothers, who died very young. There was a children's scarlet fever

epidemic, and they died at the age of five and one-and-a-half, respectively. My sister Sofia and I survived. She was born in 1905, was older than me, I was born in 1908.

I was very weak. I started off well in the first year, but then I fell ill. When I came to enter the second grade, I was interviewed, and I knew everything. I studied Sonya's textbook at home while I was ill. Sometimes Sonya helped me, otherwise I did everything myself. Sonya went to the private girls' grammar school owned by Mrs. Kufeld, who was a German, and very severe. Sonya completed this grammar school.

My sister Sonya's fate wasn't a very happy one. She did not get married, although there were suitors. She lived with our mother, unwilling to leave her. She worked as a teacher at school, teaching Russian. Then she was a teacher of Russian language and literature in the Library College. She liked her job very much, sitting late in the evenings checking the homework of her students. She never went out anywhere.

Teaching in the Library College, she made friends with a librarian who also worked there. They were such close friends that when the woman became fatally ill, she made Mother promise that Sonya would marry her husband when she dies. And Mother was as good as her word. They officially registered, but in fact did not live together, he lived in one room and she in another. He told everybody that she was his wife, but actually this was not true. Sonya died in 1979. She was buried in Saratov.