

Olga Bernstein's Sister Fenia Matusovskaya



My sister Fenia Matusovskaya, nee Bronfein. This photo was taken on my sister's 55th birthday. Kiev, 1972.

My sister Fenia Matusovskaya, nee Bernstein, was born in 1917. She also went to the Jewish kindergarten and at the age of 8 she went to the same school as my brother. She finished 8 grades at school and went to work as a cashier in a grocery store in Stalinka. She was good at calculations. In 1936 my sister married my brother's schoolmate Yakov Matusovski, born in 1915.

This Yakov visited us since he was a small boy. His mother made sugar candy. When she made plenty of them she allowed him to share candy with his friends. Keeping one candy behind a cheek we could have two glasses of tea with it. When Yasha brought this candy he asked my mother: 'Ms. Slava, have you got bread and beimele?' 'Beimele' was sunflower oil. My mother always gave him a slice of bread with beimele. So he was the one who married my sister. Yasha [common nickname for Yakov] was a driver at an enterprise. In 1938 my beloved niece Dina was born.

When the Great Patriotic War began Yakov served in a motorcar unit in the army. Once he came home and said that the plant 'Krasny rezinschik' where my sister used to work at one time was organizing evacuation. Yakov was one of the drivers that were sent to support this evacuation process. There were no suitcases, so packed up and got ready to evacuate. My sister and her daughter were in evacuation with my mother and me. She worked at harvesting and as a worker in a match factory.

Fenia's husband Yakov was at the front. He was in Berlin when the war was over. He continued his service in Potsdam, Germany. In 1945 he came to pick up Fenia and Dina. They went to Potsdam and lived there for two years. In 1947 Yasha's service was over. They returned from Germany and had their room in Stalinka returned to them. They had two rooms before the war, but they only had one returned to them. After the Great Patriotic War and till retirement Yakov worked as a driver in a vehicle company in Kiev and Fenia was a cashier in a grocery store. Dina finished Kiev Medical College, got married and worked in a Polyclinic in Kiev. Yakov died in the late 1960s. My sister died of a heart attack five years later, on 5 December 1977. Dina, her family and grandchildren live in Los Angeles. My sister and her husband were buried in the Jewish section of Baikovoye cemetery in Kiev.