

Maria Zabozlaeva's Father Esaih Ogushevich



My father Esaih Ogushevich, This photo was taken for a document in Saratov in 1940s.

My father Esaih Ogushevich was born in Saratov in 1904. After the revolution of 1917 he finished a Russian lower secondary school, Construction College and worked as a plumber. My father worked long hours. He was taciturn, strict and hardworking. He wore a tunic, but no hat. He only put on a kippah and tallit at the synagogue and tefillin on his hand and forehead when praying. He went to the synagogue with his father and his brother Michael. We lived in neighboring houses with them. And at Friday and at Saturday evening we waited at the gate of our home when they returned from synagogue.

In 1926 my mother went to dancing-party at the House of Officers where she met my father. They were seeing each other secretly from their parents since they met against the Jewish tradition of matchmaking. They got married for love in 1927. They never spoke about their wedding and I never came to asking about it. My mother and father lived in a house with my grandfather in Niznyaya Street in the Jewish neighborhood. There was a synagogue and a mosque in this street. Our neighbors were Tatars for the most part. There were few lilac bushes, a cherry tree and an apple tree near the house. There was also a summer tent house and vines around it that my father planted. There was a wood shed in the backyard until some time. We didn't keep any livestock. There was a big kitchen and a Russian stove in it. There were few small rooms in the house. Our parents had a bedroom and we, children, also had our quarters in the house. There was plain furniture: chairs and a bed with knobles, a wardrobe and a dressing table.

My mother and father had three children: I was the oldest and was born in 1929, and my brother Michael was born in 1936. We were born in Saratov. I didn't go to a kindergarten since my grandmother Sophia was looking after me. I liked playing in the yard and spending time with my grandfather Semyon. When Michael was born I began helping my mother to look after him. He was a quiet boy and didn't cause any problems. Shortly before the war in 1941 my younger sister Vera was born.

My parents didn't discuss any political subjects in the presence of their children, but I cannot tell what they talked about when they switched to Yiddish. They were not members of the Party. I understand that my parents had a loyal attitude toward the Soviet rule. They didn't have a fear of the regime.

In June 1941 we heard about the war on the radio when Molotov spoke. My father was called to his office. He was released from service in the army. He was a plumber and equipment repairman at the NKVD boiler house in Dzerzhynski Street. The NKVD office was called a 'gray house' (this building is still called so) and its boiler house was across the street from the office. My father worked there through the war. His brother Osip Avgustevich also worked there. They worked there 24 hours in a row, if necessary. I know that my father was respected at work. Life was hard during the war. Saratov was quite at a distance from the front and plants from occupied territories evacuated to our town. Those plants repaired tanks and manufactured shells for Katyusha units. Saratov worked for the front and provided food to the front. My father also worked from morning till night and my mother sewed for the front.