

Pessya Sorkina, Her Brother And Grandmother



This photograph shows me at the age of seven, I guess. At that time we lived in Ostashkov.

My brother and I were at home, we did not attend kindergartens. Mom took care of us. When we lived in Penno, a teacher came to teach us at home. Later we together with my brother lived at our grandmother and grandfather in Ostashkov, and Mom and Daddy remained in Penno.

Penno railway station where we lived is known as a place where Liza Tchaikina was executed by fascists. [Tchaikina Elizabeth (1918-1941) was a member of partisan group during the Great Patriotic War; a Hero of the Soviet Union (posthumously).] At that time we had to spend an hour to get from Penno to Ostashkov, and we had to get to Petersburg by a long-distance train (it came once a day). And now it takes two or three hours to get from Ostashkov to Petersburg by electric train.

In Ostashkov grandmother and grandfather also rented a house (like we did in Penno). The house had an attic, where we lived together with my brother. In our room there were a table and two beds. And Mom and Daddy lived in Penno, they used to visit us. I remember that they usually brought presents for us: sweets, cookies. We knew that the train arrived once a day. Parents had to go from the railway station to our place by a cab (about three kilometers). We heard the pattering of hooves and understood that they arrived! They brought us presents! I remember that we shared the

sweets with my brother. I usually hid my portion under my pillow and he ate everything immediately and worried at me to give him my sweets. At that time cookies and sweets were shaped in a very interesting way. I remember cookies with faces of twofaced Janus: one side was smiling and the other one crying. But you see, all this happened million years ago...

We came to Ostashkov to study at school and started from the 3rd form. By the way in our class I was the shortest and the youngest. And the rest pupils were older and much taller than me. I told you already that we started our school studies in Peno: a teacher came to our place to teach us, because there was no school there. I remember that we studied some foreign language (German or French: English was not in fashion).

I guess we arrived in Ostashkov in 1920. I remember that I finished 9 classes in 1929. I was fifteen years old when I finished my school, because I started from the 3rd form. My brother finished school the same year though he was three years younger than me.

So, I spent my childhood in Ostashkov, I went to school there. It was an ordinary school, not Jewish. But there were a lot of Jews. At that time I paid no special attention to nationality of the people around me. The school was divided into two steps: three or four classes of primary school and later classes of the so called real school.