

Boris Vayman's Father



This photograph shows my father. Sometimes he went to Sestroretsk of Leningrad region for vacation. Here I'll tell you about my father and our family.

My mother Badola Vayman (nee Estrinova) was born in Belarus, in Kokhanovichi village. My father David Vayman was born in Belarus, too (in the neighboring village, but I do not know its name). Mother was born in 1895, and father was younger: he was born in 1898. Both mother and father studied in cheder and finished it. Besides my father was a tailor's apprentice where he learned to sew and became an expert. Mother had got no profession, she was a housewife and took care of children. Their mother tongue was Yiddish; they also spoke Russian and Belarussian (mother knew German, she managed to learn it during WWI German occupation).

I do not know how they met each other. But I know that they had both a standard secular marriage ceremony and a ceremony in the synagogue. Before the revolution of 1917 people considered marriage according to religious traditions to be legal, and they went to civilian state registry offices only to settle marriage articles. [Registry offices were obligatory in the USSR.] They got married in 1922.

They used to wear up-to-date clothes of city style, no national Jewish clothes. Our family members were people of moderate means. We were 3 brothers, we were always well dressed, booted and satisfied with food, but at the same time we denied ourselves every luxury.

My father was a participant of the World War I. He served as an infantryman in Grodno [a city in Belarus]. He was there until the end of the war. In 1941 when the Great Patriotic War burst out, he

was drafted during the first days, and 2 or 3 months later we received a notification about his death. In fact he was considered to be missing, but till now we know nothing about his fate.

We had very good neighbors and I remember their surname till now: the Korsunskies. They were Russian, they were very kind, and we never had a difference about nationalities. Mom liked them very much. I also made friends with our neighbor Polyansky: he was 2 years older than me. By the way, much later there happened a marvelous coincidence: when the war was finished, I was moving to the Far East and suddenly at a railway station near Moscow met Polyansky. You know, we never met again. I know nothing about him and it was hard to imagine his life after our meeting, because they were on their way back from captivity.

My parents made friends with both Jews and Russians: there was no difference for them. All our neighbors loved my father very much, because he was very kind, the kindest person I knew. Mother often criticized him severely for his kindness, because he was always ready to help, to repair clothes, etc. Daddy had no enemies or evil-wishers. Father made friends with mother's brothers. They both lived not far from our place.

Summer vacations we (children) used to spend with our Mom in Belarus at Mom's sister Dasha. Here I'd like to tell you that besides 3 sons, our parents had got 2 daughters (our sisters), but unfortunately they both died at a very young age. One of them (Bella) died in Belarus during our summer holiday in 1940. She was only 1 year old. She ate some grass and fell ill of dysentery. Doctors did not manage to save her life. And our 2nd sister Tanya was the eldest: she was born in 1924. But in 1929 she hit her head somehow and died. In our family only the boys remained alive. We spent our summer vacations in Belarus, and father worked all the time. Rarely he went for vacation to a recreation house (his labor union gave him permits) in Kislovodsk and to sanatorium in Sestroretsk [a suburb of St. Petersburg].