

Dobrina Rivkind's Father, Klavdiy Rivkind, And Her Children - Vladimir And Raisa Rivkind



My father (Khlavno) Rivkind and my children: Volodya and Raisa. The picture was taken in the Forestry engineering park in Leningrad in 1967.

My father Khlavno Leibovich was born in Smolyany, a small town not far from Vitebsk, in 1898. My father graduated from the Mining Institute in Sverdlovsk, got married and moved to Petrograd in 1925. Mother and father had known each other since childhood, both had lived in Vitebsk and had a big circle of common friends. My parents were kind people. Mother was a strong-willed, self-disciplined and practical woman, she cooked very well. Father was a very talented person, he took great interest in his job, liked to play chess. I remember that parents had a very good attitude to each other, they were always cheerful and loved each other very much. In 1927 my sister Dora was born. I was born in 1932. Father worked at Scientific Research Institute "Mechanobr" - Mechanical Ore Processing. The Kola Peninsula [In the Arctic on the Barents Sea] was developed at that time and the richest fields of various minerals were discovered there. A famous biologist in those days, professor Firsman with a group of workers supervised the works. In 1932 father got enlisted for those works and left for the development of the apatite fields [a mineral used to make phosphate fertilizers], to the collective which was called "Apatite". He was the Head of the scientific-research laboratory there; he set it up himself. He made important inventions during the war and before it. He worked there until 1960, 28 years all in all. Then he retired and returned to St.Petersburg. He died in 1972. Mother lived with him most of the time and we lived with my sister at grandmother's place here. However, the apartment was kept for father, as he was in a long-term business trip. We saw him several times a year: in summer he spent his vacation with us and in winter we visited him, there were very nice places for skiing and skating. He also visited us on holidays and sent us

money. Me and my sister loved father very much, as well as he loved us and his grandchildren.

I got married in 1959 to my distant relative Lev Rivkind. I was 27 at that time and my husband was 30. In 1960 our son Volodya was born. My mother and father helped to raise him and I worked a lot. But we had very good friends in the North so our life was very joyful. The town was small, every night somebody dropped in, we went for a walk and arranged parties. But there was also a lot of work. Later in 1960 I changed my qualification and became ophthalmologist and I wanted to operate. We set up a small department, I bought instruments and got engaged into ophthalmosurgery. I obtained a qualification certificate soon after several attestations, which was not easy at that time. Three years after, in 1963, my daughter Raisa was born. Daughter and son lived in Leningrad in turn: one of them lived with my parents and the other one lived with us. The living conditions in the trans-polar region (Kirovsk) are severe: the polar night, the cold and difficulty with food products' supply. That is why my parents tried to help us and took children in from time to time to Leningrad. I remember when my son lived in Leningrad, I once came to visit him in winter, but he did not recognize me. They started to ask him, "Who is it? Who is standing over there? This is your mother Inna." And he was shy. Later I took him in and he attended a day nursery and a kindergarten. But he left for Leningrad to study at primary school. Starting from the first grade Volodya studied in Leningrad. My daughter came to live with me at that time. When he was brought for school holidays after the 1st grade, he told me, "I wish I fell ill and stayed with you." And I kept him with me. Thus I lived without any help, with two children, with enormous amount of work. It was very difficult, especially in the conditions of the North. My son also studied there and he was a good pupil at school up to the 8th grade. When we left at the beginning of 1969, his teacher told me, "I cried so much today, such a good pupil is leaving!" He was a very self-disciplined and responsible person. When he got a task, he sat down and completed it. We moved to Leningrad. We had worked in the North under a contract and when it had expired we returned home to Leningrad.