Alexander Mussel’s Family



This is my father Isaih (Shaya) Girshevich Mussel; my mother Hannah Shlemovna Mussel (nee Stolyar); my two sisters Chasya (stands first from the left) and Liya.

Father met my mother in Petrograd. It is possible that they somehow met each other in Zarasay or in Saratov, where Mom appeared to be during World War I. From Zarasay Mother went to visit her elder sister Rakhil in Vyborg. Rakhil and her husband owned a lady’s hat atelier and Mother was studying millinery. In 1917 she moved to Petrograd in search for a job and lived separately from her relatives. Later she met my father and they got married in 1919 or in 1920. There was no chuppah, they just registered their marriage at the official agency and Mother took Dad’s last name. My elder sister Chasya was born in Petrograd in the fall of 1920.

Both Mom and Dad weren’t members of any political movements. Dad saw Maxim Gorky, heard his speeches and spoke very positively about him. He also told me about other famous people, though he was no political activist. Dad worked as a watchmaker all the time. During the NEP times he owned a workshop and worked there alone. Later on he worked in a watch-making cooperative in Leningrad, which provided services to people. Mom worked as a hat seller at a store, she was a milliner.

We lived all the time on the 2nd Liniya of Vassilyevsky Island. There were five rooms in the apartment on the 4th floor. At first it was a separate apartment. Later on it was turned into a communal apartment. After the ‘compression’ our family occupied two big rooms. The rooms were 25-30 square meters each. One was used as a bedroom for everyone and the other one was used as a dining room and a classroom. There was a big communal kitchen in the apartment, around ten square meters. I was born and grew up in that apartment. Later on, in 1926, my younger sister Liya

was born in the same apartment.