

Shulman Alter, Father Of Mera Shulman With Her Children Lev And Lubov Ptakul



This photograph was taken in the suburb of Leningrad in summer of 1961 at our dacha. My father was very proud that his daughter became "a land-owning lady". He often visited us there and enjoyed playing with his grandchildren.

I'd like to tell you about my father. My father Shulman Alter Leybovich was born in 1901 in Livani.

The first profession of my father was a cutter of footwear. In 1930 he got a job of salesman in furniture shop, which belonged to his father-in-law. Later he opened his own furniture shop. In Riga there was a department store - a large wooden construction. There were a lot of furniture shops in it. My father rented one of them. In the period of 1930-1940, i.e. before the Soviets came to power my father was an owner.

My father was very clever and purposeful man. He always looked only forward and was very enterprising. But he was hard to get on with. Being offended by his relatives, he could have kept silence for half a year.

My mother was much easier to get on with. She suffered much, because her husband was a difficult man, but he gave her his full support.

Father loved all his children very much. He really adored his son, who was born 11 years after me. Father expected a son both instead of me and instead of my younger sister. He loved his daughters too, but if at the time when we were doing our homework his son wanted to walk on the table, he was allowed to do it. Daddy simply said to me and my sister 'Take away your copybooks for a minute.' I remember the following. My sister was ill with diphtheria at the age of 5. Doctor came and said that some medicine was urgently required, and that delay is deathlike. And it was about midnight. Father ran to a drugstore, which turned out to be already closed. He broke out its door, expecting that the noise would attract somebody's attention. And it happened: the indignant druggist came running, but having learnt about the point, he gave my father the medicine saying

no word, and the girl was saved.

My father died on September 9th, 1980 after a serious incurable illness.

A little boy to the left of my father is my son. - Lev Israelevich Ptakul. He was born in Riga on March 21st, 1949 and lived there with my parents during five years. In 1954 I brought him to Leningrad. There he went to school. He had difficulties in his studies, only in the 8th form he took an interest in sciences and started receiving good marks. But by that time he already made up his mind for leaving the secondary school for a professional one. Unexpectedly for his teachers and for himself he went through examinations in the 8th form having only excellent marks. Teachers persuaded him to stay at school, but he did not want to alter his mind. At the technical school he got a speciality of milling-machine operator and worked in Leningrad at the Zvezda factory, producing diesel electric power stations. He served in the army and later entered the Leningrad Northwest Correspondence Polytechnical College. He graduated from it with speciality of mechanical engineer. Unfortunately my son is single. He left for Germany in 2001. He is satisfied with his life; several times he came to see me. He has no job in Germany: he is a welfare recipient.