

Faina Melamed's Father Efim Melamed With His Colleagues



This is my father Efim Melamed (first from the left in the second row) with his colleagues. This photo was taken in Golovanevsk in 1920. My father wasn't a communist, but he always held key positions. He was responsible for meat stocks in Golovanevsk.

My father Efim Melamed was born in 1895. My father studied at school and received religious education at home. He and his brother studied Hebrew and Torah with a teacher who visited them at home. He also had private classes of playing the violin. My father's family had a talent for music. When the World War I began my father served as a private in the tsarist army. When the October Revolution began he went to the Red army. He served in the troops under command of red commander Yakir. I think he did it because he knew about pogroms and the attitude of tsarist power to Jews. He believed that the new regime would bring wealth and prosperity to all. He had a cavalry unit under his command. At home we used to keep letters of gratitude and awards of my father that disappeared later. My father was wounded in his face and had his jaws and tongue seamed. When he met with my mother in Golovanevsk he had long hair and looked like a gypsy, but my mother liked him anyway.

My parents got married in Golovanevsk in 1920. My mother told me about her wedding. She didn't even have a wedding gown. They found a cut of fabric at home. A tailor cut it for a dress and fixed the cut on her with pins and she spent a whole evening wearing this dress. My mother said that they invited a rabbi and had a chuppah. My maternal grandmother Hana did the cooking and the whole family was helping her.

In 1921 my older brother Boris was born. Since my parents spoke Yiddish at home Boris knew Yiddish well. In 1925 my sister Esfir was born. My parents moved to Odessa from Golovanevsk approximately in 1927. I was born in Odessa on 25 February 1929. During famine in 1932 my father was sent to work in Samarkand in Uzbekistan. We traveled by train. I don't know exactly what his work was about, but he had to work a lot. Before the Great Patriotic War he was director of a bakery.