

Ilia Rozenfeld's Father Alexandr Rozenfeld's Sisters



My father's sisters: sitting from left to right are Vera Rubinshtein, Maria Wasserman, Bertha Rozenfeld, Vera's daughter Anna Rubinshtein is standing. This photo was taken in Feodosia, in 1926, when she was visiting Maria.

My grandfather Shymon and grandmother Anna had 12 children, but only nine of them lived. I remember my aunt and uncles' names as they were called at home. Perhaps, they had different names written in their birth certificates or passports: Rosa, born in 1880, Vera, born in 1882, Manya, born in 1885, uncle Emmanuel [called Monia at home], born in 1890, Lubov, born in 1892, Rachil, born in 1894, Fania, born in 1896, and Bertha, born in 1902. My father Alexandr was the fourth child. He was born in 1888. The older children were born in Kobelyaki and later the family moved to Poltava. My grandfather wanted his children to get secular education and implemented this dream. Rosa and Vera finished secondary schools and a midwife school in Poltava. Lubov and Fania finished Medical College in Poltava: Lubov became a dentist and Fania became an obstetrician. Maria, Rachil and Bertha studied in Conservatories: Maria - in Moscow and her sisters - in Petersburg. They became pianists and music teachers. Uncle Emmanuel finished the Coal Industry College and became an engineer.

Thanks to my father, our house was a center of the Rozenfeld family gatherings: my father's sisters, their husbands and children. My father's sisters, their husbands and children often got together in our apartment to celebrate birthdays and Soviet holidays. We didn't observe any Jewish traditions or celebrate holidays. I don't remember any Jewish celebrations in my childhood. Though Rosa was the oldest, no family issues were decided without my father's advice. I have dim memories of aunt Rosa. She associates in my childhood memory with something warm and fragrant. She lived with her husband David in Kharkov. She was a midwife. I don't remember her husband's surname. In 1927 during an earthquake she got overstressed and fell ill with acute leukemia. She died in 1928. She didn't have children. Her husband remarried, but he remained a friend of the family and often visited us.

My father's sister Vera was a midwife. Vera made stocking on a knitting machine working at home. Many women, including my mother, were doing this to earn their living. During the Great Patriotic War Vera and her daughter were in evacuation with us and after the war we returned to Poltava. She died in 1962. Her daughter Anna Rubinshtein became an ophthalmologist. She was single and died in Poltava in 1966

Aunt Maria finished the Moscow Conservatory. She had her husband Yakov Wasserman lived in Pheodosia in the Crimea. They were both music teachers. They had no children. Fascists hanged Maria and Yakov along with other Jews in the central square in Poltava in 1941.