

Grigory Dernovsky, Mira Dernovskaya's Father



This is the portrait of my father, taken in Leningrad in 1940, one year before the war.

My father Grigory Dernovsky was the eldest son in the family, and he became a tailor like his father.

My parents lived in different cities before marrying, they were engaged to each other, but they hadn't met before the wedding. The rabbi of Pskov knew both families very well. The wedding took place in Pskov in 1927.

Afterwards the young couple moved to Leningrad and rented a room. Daddy started to work in a tailoring workshop. At first he was a cutter, then a foreman.

Before the war Daddy worked in a tailor's workshop, which was located in the building of the hostel of the Military Mechanical Institute.

All the teachers from this institute ordered clothes there, and supplied him with theatre tickets. Mum and Daddy were very fond of theater; they wouldn't miss a new play.

They also loved music and songs. Daddy bought a gramophone as soon as they appeared on sale. At home we had many records, including records of all the singers popular at that time.

Before the war, in May 1941, Mum and I were on vacation. Father was at defense works at that time. He was back in Leningrad when the blockade began and we could no longer leave. Daddy worked in a hospital as a tailor and spent all day there.

Daddy died of exhaustion. He died on 14th February 1942.

We lived in a large communal apartment. Father's body couldn't be taken away right then, so we didn't stoke the stove in that room for several days, and lived in the neighbor's room. Then father's friend and Mum took the corpse on sledges to the synagogue, and there the corpses were sent to the Jewish cemetery in Alexandrovskaya farm.

Now there is a large area of land there, where the Jews who died between 1941 and 1942 are buried. Father is buried there too. We even have the number of the trench, but it is now impossible to establish where that trench really is.

Therefore, I go there and stand on the site and remember father.