

Shifra Kravets With Her Adopted Son Lev Kravets And Her Brother Efim Schneider



From left to right: my mother Shifra Kravets, my stepbrother Lev Kravets, mother's elder brother Efim Schneider.

Efim came to Kharkov for a visit, so we had this picture taken on that occasion. The picture was taken in Moscow in 1925.

My mother's eldest brother Efim was an apprentice to a smith. Then he worked in his teacher's smithy. He got married. He had only one son, Grigoriy.

My mother was a true belle. She told me about her love for a neighbor's son. They couldn't get married because both families were poor.

When my father wooed my mother, Grandfather was happy to give his consent to their marriage. Father was rich, but he was much older than Mother.

They got married in 1921. Father was 30, and Mother was 17. Of course, they had a true Jewish wedding.

My father's first wife's name was Liba. It was a prearranged marriage. She didn't love Father, because she was in love with the son of the owner of the local sugar mill.

In 1915 their only son Lev was born. His Jewish name was Leib. Liba was a housewife. Father was taking trips constantly. Once when he came back home, he didn't find his wife there. She had left the little son and gone to her lover. To avoid a scandal Liba and her beloved left Uman.

First Lev was raised by the grandparents, and when my father married my mother she also became the mother of my stepbrother. Lev lived in our family and Mother treated him like her own child. When Lev was grown-up, about 20 years old, my parents revealed the truth to him: that my mother

wasn't his real mother. I was present when that conversation was taking place.

Lev took time to think things over and then said that he hadn't known another mother and didn't care to know about her. Before the very outbreak of war, in 1941, his real mother came to Uman.

She found my dad and asked him to bring Lev to her. Father did what she asked, but their meeting was of short duration. Lev wasn't willing to talk to her. At the beginning of the war Liba died during a bombing.