

Elena Mikhailova's Family



This is the family of my wife, Elena Mikhailova: Elena's maternal grandmother, Elena's mother Basya Fanstein, Basya's sister Rosa Ostrovskaya, grandfather Shalom Ostrovskiy. Basya's younger sister, Manya Ostrovskaya, is in the front. The picture was taken in Rouzhin, Zhytomyr oblast in 1920.

I met my future wife Elena Fanstein at my friend's place. Elena was younger than me. She was born in December 1933 in a town outside Moscow called Noginsk. Elena's father, Emmanuel Fanstein was chief accountant of the powder plant in the city of Roshal. Elena's mother was a housewife. There were three children in the family: the elder son, Valentin, born in 1929, Elena and the junior, Leonid, born in 1939. At the beginning of 1941 Elena's father was arrested. There was an arson at the powder plant, probably caused by technological malfunction, but the whole management of the plant was charged with arson and sent to the Gulag according to article #58 of the criminal code.

During the war Elena's family was evacuated to the town of Yaloutorovsk, Tumen oblast. It was a very hard time for them. Elena's parents lived in the town of Rouzhin, Zhytomyr province. Her grandmother died before the war and her grandfather, Shalom Ostrovskiy, objected to evacuation and was shot by fascists along with other Jews of Rouzhin in 1941. Then Elena's elder brother was taken to Moscow by his relatives, and they assisted him in entering a vocational school. After the evacuation Basya moved to Moscow with the two younger children. Elena's father was pardoned in 1945, but he couldn't join his family as he lived in exile for a while. However, he surreptitiously visited them in Moscow. Then he came to Moscow and found a job connected with business trips. Frequent trips gave him an opportunity not to attend political classes and general meetings.

Elena's elder brother tried to enter Moscow University, but it was unrealistic for a Jew to enter such an institution. He graduated from the polytechnic institute and worked as a researcher in the scientific and research institute. Elena's younger brother made an attempt to enter the institute of military translators, and didn't succeed. The following year he entered the textile industry institute and then worked as an engineer. Elena's elder brother's wife gave birth to a girl in 1959. Their

daughter was named Marina. Leonid, the younger brother, had three daughters: Elena born in the first marriage in 1961, and another Elena, born in 1970, and Alla, born in 1976, in the second marriage. Both brothers lived in Moscow. Valentin died in 1994. Leonid immigrated to the USA in the 1980s with his family. They have a happy life in San Francisco.