

Max Shif



In this photograph my Uncle Max Shif, my father's brother, stands at the left by the first car. It is the end of 1945, the war was already over. The picture was taken near Berlin. It shows the house in which his military unit was staying. In the window we can see the head of his daughter, Fanya, whom he had found in Minsk after the war and took with him to Germany. Max was born in 1893 in Minsk, graduated from a commercial school, and worked as a division head at the Ministry of Commerce in Belorussia. At the beginning of the war he was involved in the evacuation of the documents of the People's Commissariat, so he sent a car for his family in order to evacuate them from Minsk. But his father and sisters remained in Minsk. He learned of that only after a month, when Minsk was already occupied by the Germans. Max survived the war and died in 1946. In 1941 he learned that his children, Yasha and Fanya, had escaped from the ghetto.. Fanya managed to get to Rodoshkovichy, near Minsk, where her family had formerly rented a summer cottage, and from there went on to join a troop of partisans, where she met her future husband, Yasha Axelrod. She and her family now live in Chicago. Cousin Yasha Shif was born in Minsk in 1923 and finished school in 1941. When the war started, he was caught in a ghetto. Later he managed to escape and join the partisans. He was wounded in 1944. After the liberation of Minsk, Yasha went back there and entered law school, which is where he met his future wife, Roza. They had a daughter named Rita. He worked as an attorney in a legal advice office near Minsk, but now he and his family live in New York. It was a miracle that our cousins survived the war.