

Semyon Sandler



This is a photo of my father Semyon Sandler, taken in Chernovtsy in 1947. My father was on the front during the Civil War. My parents got married after he returned. I don't know whether they had a wedding party. They got married in 1925, and my brother Mihail was born in 1928. The newly weds lived with my mother's parents. Mama was a housewife and looked after my brother. My father took a course in accounting and got a job as an accountant at the peat-bog. My father told me that there was a time in 1937 when he was very afraid that he would be arrested. I don't know why he was afraid, but there was no way of asking 'why' at that time. It was a small town and some acquaintance from the NKVD mentioned to my father that it would be better for him to hide away

for some time. Many of my father's friends were arrested, sentenced or disappeared in prison camps. My father was away from home for about a year. The repression affected even distant locations, although there was no industry apart from the peat shop. During the war my father had been wounded in the battles near Stalingrad and sent to Kopeysk in the Ural. He developed gangrene in the hospital where he was staying and his leg had to be amputated. It's a miracle that my father survived. Later he had another surgery. Then he somehow managed to be transferred to the hospital in Frunze. There weren't enough nurses in the hospital. Mama went to the hospital to look after Papa. He was released in 1943 with his leg amputated up to his hip joint, and he walked with crutches for the rest of his life.