

Mia Ulman's Maternal Grandparents Semyon Ulman And Berta Bravo



These are my maternal grandparents, Semyon Ulman and Berta Bravo. The picture was taken in 1887 in Saint-Petersburg at Steinberg's photo studio located on Nevsky prospect. My grandmother was 20 and my grandfather 22 years old at the time of the photo.

My grandfather was born in the village of Serebryanka near Luga in 1865. They had a big family. Before the Great Patriotic War they all lived in Leningrad. My grandfather worked as a forester near Luga before the October Revolution. I don't know where he worked in Leningrad, but I know that his job had to do with the timber industry. He was very well-educated and well-read. There was an excellent library in the house containing Jewish and secular literature. It was plundered during the Great Patriotic War when we were in evacuation in Moscow. They didn't take the Jewish books though. We still have the two volumes of the History of the Jewish Nation, published in 1914, and the 16 volumes of the Jewish Encyclopedia in Russian.

My grandfather was old when I was born and I remember him having gray hair and a small beard. When I got up in the morning he was already dressed. He always wore a black suit and a tie and looked very neat. When he went out he put on a black coat and a hat. He survived the war and returned from Nizhny Tagil, where he had been in evacuation. He died in 1948.

My maternal grandmother was born in the town of Vilno [Lithuania] in 1867. She was a housewife and raised nine children. All the other children my grandmother gave birth to died as infants. She was illiterate, so my grandfather educated her, taught her how to read and write. She read a lot afterwards, including newspapers and magazines, which my grandfather bought and later subscribed to.

My grandmother wore common clothes: blouses, dresses and skirts of pale colors. She sewed very well, and made clothes for all the children. She also inspired my love for needlework, and I later signed up for dress-making courses. She had a wonderful talent for raising children, everybody obeyed her implicitly. Later all grandchildren were raised by her - she had a good influence on them. In 1947 she got paralyzed and was bound to bed for the next three years. During that time she was lavished with care and attention by her children. She died in 1950.