

Galina Barskaya With Her Mother Malya Barskaya, Brother Grigory And Sister Yekaterina



This is my mother, Malya Barskaya. Standing on a chair is my brother, Grigory Barsky, born in 1910. Standing in front of my mother is my sister, Yekaterina Barskaya, born in 1904. My mother is holding me, Galina Barskaya, born in 1914.

The photo was taken in 1915 in Mozyr.

My name is Galina Veniaminovna Barskaya. My Jewish name was Hannah. My aunt, who raised me, said that my real name was Hannah-Reizele. The problem is that my mother had left no documents, and I know these things only from the words of my aunt. My real age is also a mystery, and the date of my birth was established by the Jewish rabbinical court.

The court has established the date of my birth: 24th December 1914. Court proceedings took place in Kremenchug in around 1918 when we moved there. My mother died very early, when I was still a baby, and my father was at the front at the time, so nobody knew my real date of birth.

My father's name was Demyan Barsky, but for some reason I was registered as 'Veniaminovna' by patronymic. My father was certainly Jewish. My sister, who was born from a different mother, had the patronymic 'Demyanovna.'

I was born in the town of Mozyr, Belarus. I never knew my grandparents – by the time of my birth they had already died, and there was nobody who could tell me about them.

My mother's first name was Malya, last name – Barskaya, and I don't know her maiden name.

When World War I broke out, my father was called up to serve, and he left her pregnant, alone, with three children. She had a very difficult pregnancy and died in labor because of heavy bleeding. Mozyr was a very small town and nobody could provide first aid to her, so she died in labor. That's what I learned from my elder sister, Yekaterina, who was born in 1904. I also had an elder brother, Grigory, who was born in 1910.

We were left orphans for our father was at the front. Our elder sister, Yekaterina, substituted Mother for us, because she was very practical. She took care of us, and this was our only hope. We had a lot of problems, even lice, because nobody took real care of us. My poor sister had some problem with her hair – she lost all her hair for some reason.