

Mark Epstein's Parents And Their Friend



This photo was taken in 1950s in Leningrad and shows my parents and one of their friends during Seder.

My father's family came from the town of Velizh in Belarus. My paternal grandparents were born in Velizh. My father was born there too. It happened in 1885. Unfortunately certificate of his birth was lost.

His name was Epstein Eugeny Markovich or Genuch Meyerovich (his Jewish name). He was a tailor. In St. Petersburg father worked at Bronstein's Berlin shop from 1912 till 1917.

From 1918 till 1922 he worked as a tailor at the Theatre of Musical Comedy. Later he worked at the Smolninsky garment factory.

Father had got 4 sisters: aunt Tsilye, aunt Zhenya, aunt Rose, and aunt Sonya. They all lived in Leningrad.

Aunt Tsilye was an outstanding therapist, her husband Samuil Karpovich was a lecturer at the Medical College, and their son Victor (he is 71 years old at present) works as a plasma metal cutting engineer.

Aunt Zhenya was a singer and worked at a musical school, her husband's name was Victor Markovich. They had got a son Boris. All of them are not alive by now. All her life long aunt Rose worked with children at a kindergarten, she was not married.

The 4th sister was aunt Sonya, her husband Ilya and their son Izya have already died (Izya was knocked down by a tram when he was 4 years old). Their daughter Galina is now 86 years old and her health is very poor.

They all were educated well. I guess my father was the eldest child in the family. I do not remember where my paternal grandmother lived. I saw her only several times in my life.

Father was an excellent tailor. He had got a lot of customers and not only in the city: some of them came from other cities.

My father was religious: he observed the lent, prayed, attended the synagogue, but he was not fanatic.

During all his life father was engaged in individual work (he worked every evening at home), and worked honestly. Soviet authorities confiscated everything we had, and father was deported to Luga of Leningrad region, where we lived several years.

It happened in 1933 or 1934, and we moved to Luga all 4 together: Mom, father, my brother Alexander (born in 1921) and I.

In Luga father found a job as a manager of tailor's workshop. He worked there very well. Later things changed and... we returned to Leningrad.

Our apartment was already occupied, and we had got great difficulties changing our house in Luga for an apartment in Leningrad.

At that time grandmother and grandfather lived in Leningrad in the 8th Sovetskaya Street. Both grandfather and father had no concern with military service.

In 1930s when authorities banished my father to Luga, parents bought a small house there. They grew vegetables and berries. In Luga father did not observe Tradition (no ceremonies), because he was oppressed by the fact of deportation.

I remember that in Luga father went on sewing and carried finished clothes to customers in Leningrad. His clients did not leave him. It was very difficult for him both morally and financially, but it was necessary to work: father had to support his family.

In 1936-1937 we returned to Leningrad and settled in Nevsky prospect, 158. Before our departure to Luga we lived in Pushkinskaya Street. I remember it very well, because more than 55 years I worked as a teacher and have exact memory.