

Samuel Eirus And His Mother



This photograph was taken in 1931 and shows my mother and I. It is written on the reverse side 'To dear uncle and aunt'.

I guess we took this photo especially for sending to our relatives (I do not remember what uncle and what aunt).

My Mom told me about her childhood very little. Her family lived in the town of Opochna. [Opochna is situated 130 km far from Pskov.] Her mother had got 3 children: 2 girls and a boy.

Her father (my maternal grandfather) was a true Jewish small trader: he had got a horse and carried junk from village to village, changing it for money or for different things. Mom said that he traveled much and worked as a real commercial traveler.

So the family was rather poor. But my grandfather's wife did not work and he had a horse, therefore he was wealthier than the others. On the other hand, they lived in out-of-the-way village: life was cheaper there than in cities.

They observed no Jewish traditions.

I know nothing about the way my mother and her relatives got to Estonia. I was born in Tartu where my father and mother lived at that time.

I think that they lived there for a rather long period of time: my mother's husband and her brother Mulya, for example, played together in the orchestra - I guess it means that the family settled down for good in Tartu.

I know nothing about the way my father got acquainted with my Mom: I was not interested and Mom told me about my father not much.

My mother's sister Alexandra was married to Eugeny Shuster. They had got 2 children: Roman and Simon. Simon, the younger brother died during the war. Before the war he studied at the musical school (he played violin).

When the war burst out, he started working as a milling-machine operator at a plant. When the blockade began, all plants were evacuated, and his factory moved to Chelyabinsk.

There he could not survive under unbearable conditions (he was only a boy, mamma's darling) and decided to run away from Chelyabinsk to Leningrad. They caught him on his way and sent to penal battalion [penal battalions consisted of military men who committed crimes during wartime], where he was killed. You see, the boy was considered to be a deserter!

Roman was a student of the 3rd course when he was drafted in 1939. He finished a school of younger commanders and fought at the German front line and later in Japan. When we finished war against Germany, our armies were moved to Japan [the interviewee is mistaken: they moved to the Far East, Soviet armies never were in Japan].

Roman returned home with a lot of military awards. I remember that he was an orderly of a high commander.

After the end of the war he started working at the Leningrad cartographical factory. He considered himself to be too old for studying. All his life long he worked. Recently he became a pensioner, but unfortunately while crossing the street he was run over and died.

Roman was married to a Russian woman, but they divorced long time ago (he did not marry for the 2nd time). He had got a son Anatoly Shuster. Anatoly lives in St. Petersburg. He is married to a Jewess.

I do not remember when aunt Alexandra arrived in Leningrad. I remember her and her husband well because we often visited each other. She stayed in Leningrad during the blockade. Aunt Alexandra received an award for defense of Leningrad: she was in fighting battalion (they put out fire bombs on city roofs).

I was born in 1929 in Tartu.