

Irina Lopko's Mother Fania Mindel, Aunt Manya Zaitseva, Aunt Olga Alpershtein With Her Husband Ziama Alpershtein



My mother's family from left to right: my mother's sister Olga Alpershtein (nee Silin), my mother's sister Manya Zaitseva (nee Silin), my mother Fania Mindel (nee Silin), Olga's husband Ziama Alpershtein. This photo was made in Nezhin in 1929.

My mother Fania Silin was born in 1907. She studied in grammar school for few years and she often recalled this time in her life. My mother did very well at school, but in 1818 the grammar school was closed and later it was reopened to be a labor school. My mother continued studies in an accounting school. After the Great Patriotic War my mother finished extramural Moscow Financial College.

My mother's sister Olga (her Jewish name was Golda) was born in 1909. She also studied in grammar school few years. After school she moved to Moscow where she went to work as a draftswoman at a plant. She married Ziama Alpershtein, a nice Jewish guy, a worker. They received a room in a communal apartment where their daughter Lena was born. In summer 1941, at the very beginning of the war, Ziama perished at the front. Olga died in Moscow at the age of 44. Their daughter Lena worked at a post office. She passed away in Moscow in 1998.

The next mother's sister Manya was born in 1911. She followed into her sister's steps moving to Moscow. She became a highly qualified marker at a plant. Her husband Nikolay Zaitsev was a highly qualified worker. He came from Klin in Moscow region. They said that when Nikolay married my aunt Manya his father came to visit them from Klin. He asked Nikolay 'Son, there are no icons in your room. How am I supposed to pray?' and Nikolay replied 'Father, I have a Jewish wife. We do not pray'. The old man was full of respect. He said 'Jews are special and important people. There was a Jewish pharmacist in our town: he was a well-respected person'. The Russian son-in-law respected my grandmother very much and she lived with them. Regretfully, Manya had an invalid

baby. She spent all her time looking after the child, but the child died. Manya was a housewife. She also took care of my grandmother. Manya died in 1978.

The sisters were very close. They spoke Yiddish, cooked for holidays, always celebrated holidays together and supported each other. Although they moved to Moscow when they were young they kept their identity of provincial Jews from Nezhin.