

Yefim Volodarskiy's Father Srul Leib Volodarskiy



My father Srul Leib Volodarskiy (1870 - 1957). This amateur photo was taken during his trip to Dnepropetrovsk to visit his son Semyon Volodarskiy in 1949.

My father Srul Leib Volodarskiy was the oldest in the family. He was born in Belaya Tserkov in 1870. He finished a cheder and grammar school and worked in the transportation office of his father's. My father inherited his father's office. It still existed in the 1920s and was called 'Ukrvozdukhput'. Its staff consisted of three employees. Belaya Tserkov is on the way to Kiev. There is a railway station in the town. My father's office arranged delivery of shipments to the railroad for further transportation. He hired horse-drawn wagons to support this deliveries. He arranged for load and passenger transportations to other villages on horse-driven wagons, they didn't even know about vehicles at that time in Belaya Tserkov. During the Soviet regime my father's office merged with a bigger transportation office. My father was responsible for railroad transportations.

My father was sure to celebrate Saturday, Pesach and all other holidays. They followed all religious rules. He went to the synagogue and I was carrying his tallit and the Torah. My father prayed and then we went home together. We asked our Ukrainian or Russian neighbor to light the lamps at home. We followed kosher rules and made matzah.

My parents had four sons: Matvey, Semyon, Shimshin and I, Yefim. I hardly remember my mother who died of typhus in 1919, when I was 2 and a half. When my mother died, our housemaid, who was as quiet as a mouse when my mother was with us, stole everything valuable from the house. Of course, my father needed a mistress in his house and he remarried shortly afterward. My stepmother's name was Hava. Poor father, he worked all days long and didn't have time for us.

During the Great Patriotic War my brother Semyon and his wife, my father and stepmother evacuated to Nizhniaya Salda. My stepmother died in 1943 and my father decided to join me in Kuibyshev [about 1700 km from Kiev]. After the war my wife and I, our son, my wife's mother and my father returned to Kiev.

After we returned to Kiev my father decided to visit Belaya Tserkov to take a look at the house. The house was sinking to one side and there were other tenants there. Of course, the authorities acknowledged my father's ownership of this house. However, they only gave him one room in the house since he was alone. My father was so kind. He never managed to force these tenants to move out of his house. It was his house and he could take an effort to make them move out, but he wasn't this kind of a person. He lived there for a short time, but what kind of life it was when he was alone? He sold his room for peanuts and moved to me in Kiev. In 1950 I went to work as shop superintendent at the motorcycle plant. My father also worked there till his last day. He died at the age of 87. He worked as a timekeeper clerk, including description of the product and its quantities in the sheets and indicating the shipments, and had a sound mind. My father died in 1957. We buried him in the town cemetery.