

Yefim Volodarskiy's Brother Matvey Volodarskiy



My brother Matvey Volodarskiy. This photo was taken for the theatrical studio where my brother was working in Belaya Tserkov town in 1930. He gave it to me for the memory.

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, my father needed a mistress in his house and he remarried shortly afterward. My stepmother's name was Hava. Matvey, the oldest of us, was 12. He remembered my mother well, and my stepmother couldn't compare with her. We didn't think much of her and Matvey was the one whom we listened to. Poor father, he worked all days long and didn't have time for us.

My older brother Matvey Volodarskiy was born in Belaya Tserkov in 1907. He was very talented. He studied in cheder and finished a Jewish school in Belaya Tserkov. At the age of 15 Matvey entered the affiliate of Kiev Polytechnic College in our town, but my father had to bribe director of this affiliate since they didn't want to admit Matvey due to his young age. Later Verlinskiy organized a theatrical studio in Belaya Tserkov, and advanced Jewish young people began to attend it. Verlinskiy also enticed my brother there. Matvey quit his college and began to work in this studio. Their employees earned little money since they were funded by sponsors. My brother earned five or ten rubles. It was a sufficient amount. It was possible to buy a piece of clothing and have some money left for cigarettes and food, for example, a bun cost 3 kopeck. Matvey spent day and night in this studio rehearsing and acting. In the morning he sent me to the butcher to buy sausage cut

offs. The name of this sausage maker was Novikov. You won't find sausage like that anywhere today! I bought 100 grams sausage cut offs for my brother. I can still remember the smell of this sausage. There were no soy beans in it! There was a clock shop on the way to the sausage store and Matvey taught me to ask them what time it was. Matvey or I didn't have watches. Only our father had one.

Some time in the late 1920s - early 1930s this theatrical studio was closed. There were Jewish theaters in Kharkov [500 km from Kiev] and Moscow and studio actors moved to these theaters. Matvey became a producer in the Kharkov Jewish theater. He knew Jewish culture and Hebrew very well from cheder. Later this theater moved to Kiev. My brother left the theater and began to lecture in the Kiev Theatrical College. Later the Academy of film producers opened in Kiev. The first admission was about 12 students. Matvey finished this academy and became a film producer. At first my brother worked as film producer the film studio in Kiev and later, before the great Patriotic war, he moved to Moscow to work at the 'Mosfilm' studio. In Moscow my brother met Tatiana, a Russian girl, and married her in 1939, I think. Their son Vsevolod was born shortly afterward.