

Mera Shulman And Her Family Members



This photograph was taken approximately in 1940 (in summer) at the seaside near Riga.

Financial position of our family was quite stable. Mum never worked in her life. Her husband provided for the family. Children lacked nothing. Daddy commanded all money: he gave money to mother for daily needs. If Mum said reproachfully that Zelda, wife of her brother had bought a fur coat (to tell the truth, Mum wore a fur coat too), Daddy answered 'Do not look at those who are higher, look at those who are lower.' Daddy had the following unshakable rule: if he earned a ruble, he gave 50 kopecks for expenditure, if he earned two rubles, he gave one ruble - he saved half of his earnings, no matter how small they were. He said to Mum 'Listen, we have two daughters, we should give dowry twice.' We were well dressed and our family was well-to-do, but our income was average. At school there were many children much better provided for. I remember that my uncles, my mother's brothers were better off. When I asked, why their family had several-course dinners, and ours had only one, my parents answered 'Everybody is different.' Each summer we left for the seaside [small villages near Riga at the Gulf of Riga], but not to the same places with my aunts and uncles, but you see, sea and air are identical everywhere.

In summer we never went to children's camps and never spent vacations without our parents.

I do not remember when I went by a motor-car for the first time. I am sure that it happened after the end of the war. Before the war we went by cab and by tram, later by bus. It was possible to go to the seaside by train (by a steam locomotive, certainly). It makes one laugh, but for the first time in my life I visited a restaurant in 1990, when we celebrated the 60th anniversary of my sister. Our father hated restaurants: he never took there his family and never visited restaurants himself.

My sister Dina Alterovna Uden (nee Shulman) was born on March 2nd, 1930 in Riga. She died on April 17th, 2005 in the USA after a serious incurable illness.

I loved my sister very much, but when she was born it was difficult for me to get used to the idea that I was no more the only daughter of my Daddy and Mum. Probably, that was the reason why I broke my favorite doll to pieces, when at the age of several months my sister touched it.

When I grew up, I made good friends with my sister. We were on terms of intimacy with her.

Parents decided to send her to my school, and I helped her getting ready for it. We often talked to each other in Hebrew, so that our parents could not understand us.

My sister managed to enter the school, but studied there not for long: the war burst out. We evacuated in a small village in Chkalov (at present Orenburg) region. There Dina entered the fourth form of a four-year school. Later, thanks to efforts of our father we moved to Novotroitsk town. My sister finished there 6 classes. She finished her school education already in Riga after returning from evacuation. After finishing a seven-year school she tried to enter a Law School, but failed. Then she entered some another technical school and finished it. After that she tried to enter a Department of Law in the University, but failed again: sure that was already a manifestation of Anti-Semitism. My sister got a job in a fashion atelier to sew caps. Later she entered a correspondence course of the State Latvian University and graduated from it. She worked in Riga at a factory; it seems that they produced semiconductors. She was a very talented engineer, a real expert.

Her husband Ruven Abramovich Uden, an engineer worked at the factory, producing electrotechnical equipment. He was a gifted person: he drew, wrote verses. In 1956 their son Boris was born. All of them left for the USA in 1993.