

Mikhail Leger's Father Gilel Leger



My father Gilel Leger near our house. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1936.

My father must have been raised religious and must have finished a cheder school. My father could read and write in Hebrew. He knew prayers and Jewish traditions. My father's mother tongue was Yiddish. My father must have got some secular education. He worked as an accountant after getting married. My father went to work, when he was young. He never told me about his youth.

I don't know how my parents met: whether there was a matchmaker or they met themselves somehow. Anyway, they got married in 1928. My parents had a traditional wedding with a chuppah and a rabbi. Mama and papa rented a little house with one room, a small kitchen and a fore room on a hill in the suburb of Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I was born there in 1935. It moldered in the course of time. This house is still there, though many others in this neighborhood have been removed. I can see it from my window. They fetched water from a nearby well in the street. There was a plot of land near the house, about 10 square meters, and the lady allowed mama to make a small vegetable garden there. Mama liked growing dill, parsley and cucumbers, selecting seeds and watching her plants grow.

There was a Russian stove where mama cooked in winter and it also heated the house. In summer mama only stoked the stove to bake bread. She cooked on a small stove on 3 legs. Mama baked bread for a whole week on Friday. It was delicious even when it grew stale. Electricity came to Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1948. There were kerosene stoves used to light houses before. Mama basically followed kashrut. We always celebrated Sabbath at home. We celebrated Jewish holidays. My parents went to the synagogue on these days. My parents spoke Russian to me at home and only switched to Yiddish, when they didn't want me to understand the subject of their discussion.