

Revekka, Monya And Golda Rubel With Nahman Roitman



This picture was taken in Rezina by the photographer Golovanevskiy. These are my cousins from left to right: Revekka, Monya, Golda Rubel (children of my father's brother Yankel) and my husband-to-be Nahman Roitman. The picture was taken in 1937 before Yankel's family's departure for Argentina.

My father and Yankel had already been working when their family left for Argentina. They were loaders at the creamery since the age of 13. Yankel lived in Rezina. He got married rather early. His wife was a Jew called Pesya. They had four children – a boy, Monya, born in 1922, and the daughters Golda, born in 1917, Revekka, born in 1924, and Leya, born in 1926. Yankel worked really hard to provide for such a large family. He worked two shifts at the creamery. On 12th October 1935 my uncle died as a result of the collapse of the ceiling in one of the creamery premises. During his funeral the coffin wasn't open so that the relatives wouldn't see Yankel's dreadful remains.

For two years Pesya and her children lived on the money given to them by my father and the kin from Argentina. In 1937 they received an invitation from Argentina and Pesya left with her children. I loved them a lot, especially Revekka and my peer Leya. We took a picture together before they left. That was the last time I saw them. Before 1940 we received letters from Argentina and then the Soviet regime was established in Bessarabia and it was impossible to write to our relatives abroad. We couldn't correspond with them after the war either.

I found out from my distant relatives, who lived in Israel, that neither my relatives who left with Grandfather, nor Yankel's children ever became rich. However, they had a decent and good life. They didn't respond to my letters that I sent after perestroika, when it became possible to keep in touch with relatives abroad. I know that Grandfather Abram and Grandmother Nehama died in the 1960s, and both of them were over 90 years old. Yankel's children are still alive and have their own families with the exception of Leya. She was the only one who remained single. Unfortunately this is all I know about my father's family.

Out of all the siblings of my paternal grandfather I knew grandfather's sister Perl best of all. She lived in Rezina with her husband David Roitman, who worked from morning till night, and her son Nahman. She was a housewife. With the outbreak of World War II, she and her husband went into evacuation on foot. They reached Rybnitsa, where Grandfather's younger brother Gedali Rubel lived and worked. They didn't walk far and were chased down by the Fascists. All of them – Perl with her husband and younger son and Gedali with his wife – were brought to a ghetto in Transnistria, in the town of Balta. All of them perished there during one of the actions against the Jews. Perl's son Nahman, born in 1920, was drafted into the army in 1941. He was in the labor army and when World War II was over, he came back to Kishinev.