

Misha And Syoma Klinger



These are my children Misha (on the left) and Syoma Klinger (on the right). This photo was taken in Odessa in 1940.

In 1935 our son Syoma was born. In 1938 Misha was born and in 1939 our son Tolik followed. We still lived in a one-room apartment. There was a wardrobe, beds, a small table and a few chairs in our room. There was also a pram and a cradle where Syoma and Misha slept. Tolik slept in the pram.

The children often fell ill. They contracted illnesses from one another. All three of them had scarlet fever and diphtheria. My wife had a hard time looking after three children. Syoma went to kindergarten and Misha went to a nursery school.

I remember very well the radio broadcast announcing the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on 22nd June 1941. At 2 o'clock in the morning on 23rd June a courier delivered a subpoena from the military registry office to my home. Since that time till the end of the war I was in the army.

I had no information about my wife or sons until 1945. When I came to Odessa after the war I found out that my wife Luba and the children had perished. They were in Odessa ghetto, then they were sent to Berezovka and from there they walked to Kotovka farm. They were showered with cold water on the way - and it was winter - and tortured. In Kotovka farm policemen shot them. There are 92 people buried there, including my boys and my wife. There is a memorial plaque there, but I've never visited the site. When I heard that my wife and my children perished I didn't know how I would overcome the sorrow.