

Faina Melamed's Parents Efim And Leya Melamed's Tenaim



This is my parents Efim and Leya Melamed's betrothal document, the tenaim, issued in Golovanevsk in 1920.

My father Efim Melamed was born in 1895. I have an excerpt from the synagogue roster that indicates that he was born in Uman. I don't know how the family happened to be in Uman at that period of time. My paternal grandfather Yakov Melamed - whose date of birth I don't know, regrettably -, was born and lived in Odessa. Grandfather Yakov had education. He spoke Yiddish and Russian and had a good conduct of English. He was a rich man, an industrialist. He had a luxurious apartment in 20, Petra Velikogo Street and his own carriage and horses. My paternal grandmother Sara Melamed, nee Shpolianskaya, was born in Odessa too. My grandfather was a gambler and used to lose a lot of money. My grandmother divorced him and raised her four children herself. My father studied at school and received religious education at home. He and his brother studied Hebrew and Torah with a teacher who visited them at home. He also had private classes of playing the violin. My father's family had a talent for music. When the World War I began my father served as a private in the tsarist army. When the October Revolution began he went to the Red army. He served in the troops under command of red commander Yakir. I think he did it because he knew about pogroms and the attitude of tsarist power to Jews. He believed that the new regime would bring wealth and prosperity to all. He had a cavalry unit under his command. At home we used to keep letters of gratitude and awards of my father that disappeared later. My father was wounded in his face and had his jaws and tongue seamed. When he met with my mother in Golovanevsk he had long hair and looked like a gypsy, but my mother liked him anyway. They decided to get married.

My mother Leya Goichman was born in Golovanevsk town in 1897. I don't know where she studied, but she had education. She could read and write in Russian. She spoke Yiddish with my father at home and she knew many prayers. Perhaps, she studied in a Jewish school. Somehow I didn't ask my mother these questions and now I can only guess. I remember that my mother danced waltz and tango beautifully. My mother was an interesting woman. She was slim, had a slender waist and beautiful face. She never used make up, but had pink cheeks. I don't know how my mother met my father, but I think it happened in Golovanevsk.

My parents got married in Golovanevsk in 1920. My mother told me about her wedding. She didn't even have a wedding gown. They found a cut of fabric at home. A tailor cut it for a dress and fixed the cut on her with pins and she spent a whole evening wearing this dress. My mother said that they invited a rabbi and had a chuppah. My grandmother Hana did the cooking and the whole family was helping her. My father wasn't a communist, but he always held key positions. He was responsible for meat stocks in Golovanevsk. In 1921 my older brother Boris was born. Since my parents spoke Yiddish at home Boris knew Yiddish well. In 1925 my sister Esfir was born. My parents moved to Odessa from Golovanevsk approximately in 1927. I was born in Odessa on 25 February 1929.