

Faina Saushkina's Family



From left to right, bottom row: my mother Sophia Glezer, my daughter Tamara and my father David Glezer. From left to right, standing: my brother Naum and sisters Manya and Sarah. Photo made on the occasion of my visiting my parents' home in Slavuta at the beginning of June 1941 few days before the beginning of the Great patriotic War.

My parents got married shortly before WWI in 1914. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a huppah and many guests that were their relatives and friends.

When WWI War began in 1914 my parents moved in the eastern direction to Ukraine. Many Jewish families were moving to Ukraine from Poland at that time trying to escape from the war. I, Feiga Glezer, was born on 20 July 1917. When I was two or three months old we moved to the town of Slavuta that belonged to Kamenets-Podolsk region (Khmelnitsk region now) 500 km to the west from Kiev. I don't know why my parents moved. We lived in a house in the central street with two entrance doors on both sides. Our family resided in one half of the house. We had 3 big rooms and a kitchen. We had a table and a cupboard in the dining room where we had meals on holidays and at Shabbat. My parents had a bedroom and we had a children's room. We didn't have a kitchen garden or livestock. Jews in Slavuta bought all they needed at the market. In 1922 my mother gave birth to a baby girl that was named Manya. In 1925 my mother gave birth to a son. He was named Naum.

My father was a very skilled shoemaker. He worked at a shop and took some additional work home to provide better for our big family. It was a state run shoe shop on the round floor. They received a salary. It wasn't much, but they had sufficient to make their living. There were about 10 employees in the shop, Jews in the majority. They mainly fixed shoes and sometimes made shoes or orthopedic boots. In the evening when my father came from work he had dinner and sat down on a low stool to work. He had a shoe "leg" and a box of tools beside him. My father often fixed shoes for his clients and never refused even from minor orders. He was a very kind and tactful man and worked a lot. My father had a hobby: singing. On Saturday and holidays he sang at the synagogue and took part in an amateur Jewish choir in the cultural center.

My mother was a housewife. We weren't a wealthy family, but my mother was very good at housekeeping and we had sufficient of everything. On weekdays our major food was cereals, potatoes and vegetables. My mother made potato pancakes, potato, cabbage and carrot chops. She only made kosher food.

My father never worked at home on Friday evening. The whole family got together to meet Saturday. My mother lit a candle saying a prayer and our father said "brakha" ["blessing" in Yiddish] for bread and wine and we sat at the table. On Saturday morning my father went to the synagogue. When he came back home one of the children took lunch out of the oven and we took to our Saturday meal. We often had poor Jews sitting at the table with us. Nobody in our family ever raised his voice - we got along well and treated each other nicely.

My husband Alexandr served in the army in Slavuta. At the beginning of 1935 we had a civil ceremony at the local registry office. On 30 March 1935 my husband's term of service was over. He demobilized and we began to prepare to departure to Voronezh where he came from.

Alexandr's sister Ania met us in Voronezh. She lived in Voronezh with her husband. They welcomed us with warmth and we moved in with them into their big room. My husband went to work as a locksmith at the same plant where he worked before he went to serve in the army. I went to work at a kindergarten. On 15 September 1938 in Voronezh my daughter Tamara was born.

On 12 June 1941 I took my daughter Tamara to visit my parents in Slavuta. This was my first visit after I left. We had a photo of the family taken on this occasion. On 21 June my mother and I went to the prom of my younger sister Manya. When we were on the way home late at night all of a sudden there appeared black planes in the sky dropping bombs. This was the beginning of the Great patriotic War.