

Leo Ginovker With His Friend Ilja Izrim



This is a picture of me with my childhood friend, Ilya Izrim, in Haapsalu in 1918. I was born in 1914. At birth I was given the name of Leo, but for my entire life they called me Moritz. When I was a child, we read a fairy tale, and Max and Moritz were the names of the two characters. My brother's name was Max, so my elder brothers began calling me Moritz. This is what they called me at home, at school, and even afterwards. My old friends still call me Moritz, although I am Leo according to all the papers. I had a nurse until I was six. The nurse was an old Estonian lady. Thanks to her, I easily mastered Estonian. Every summer starting from 1915 or 1916 my parents went to mud bath resorts. There were two such resorts in Estonia: the small town of Haapsalu [before 1918 - Gapsal]

just south-west of Tallinn on the coast of the Baltic Sea, and the town of Kuressaare on the island of Saaremaa. They took a train to get to Haapsalu, and a boat to get to Kuressaare. My brothers were too big and not interested in visiting resorts, but I went along with my parents for several summers. We didn't have a summer cottage of our own, so we rented one. My parents went to the clinic to get treatment. On one occasion they even put me into a mud bath. Our friends and their families usually rented summer cottages nearby. For several successive summers it was the Izrim family. The head of the family was my father's business partner at the time. Ilya, their son, was two years older than me, and we had a very good time together. Many years later, during the Soviet power, Ilya worked as head of department in the Estonian Ministry of Health.