

Semyon Gun And His Brother Alexandr Gun



It's me Semyon Gun and my brother Alexandr. This photo was taken in Tobolsk in 1941. I was born in maternity hospital #2 in Komsomolskaya Street in Odessa on 17 October 1934. I was named Semyon after my mother's father. I was circumcised on the 8th day. On 21 December 1937 - Stalin's birthday - my brother Alexandr was born. I attended a kindergarten then from where I brought measles, chickenpox and whooping cough and Alexandr contracted them. I actually didn't fall ill while Alexandr had all these diseases. In 1941 I turned 7 and was to go to two schools: secondary school and a music school in Sobornaya Square. My parents wanted me to play the violin. In the autumn 1941 before the occupation of Odessa our family: my father, my mother, Alexandr and I, mother's sister Nina, mother's adoptive parents Lazar and Risia Alpert evacuated with the plant where my father worked. We arrived at Novorossiysk by the sea. The equipment of the plant was loaded on a train to be transported to Siberia. We went by this train as well. We arrived at Tobolsk [2,900 km from Odessa], Tumen region. As soon as my father delivered the shipment to the point of destination he was summoned to the front. We lived in Tobolsk for two years without my father. We lived in the street along the river bank. There were wooden houses in the street. There was a Russian stove in each house. There were round openings in the walls 10 cm in diameter that served for the purpose of ventilation. They were tucked with rags. Every week families went to the sauna. The major part of the life of local residents was sauna, tea and pies. During the war there was no sugar or tea and they drank boiling water with salt and garlic. Pies were made with fish filling. It took us some time to get used to this food. They grew carrots, turnip and cabbage - very delicious. We also made nettle soup and 'zatirukha': water added to flour cooked on the frying pan. In winter frozen milk wrapped in cloth was sold. Milk boiled in a Russian stove was something out of this world. We received lumps of chocolate instead of sugar. It was more delicious than chocolate that we have nowadays. We looked forward to receiving a letter from father. When a postman brought a letter he was always invited for a cup of tea. Mother read these letters with tears in her eyes. There were two stone buildings in Tobolsk: a church and a school building of red bricks on a hill. I went to school there. I didn't have a pen and grandfather

Lazar cut a stick from a branch and made me a pen. This was the first pen in my life.