

Reizl And Iosif Reidman



This is a photo of my parents Reizl and Iosif Reidman. It was taken in Olevsk in 1928.

My parents were born in Olevsk, a Jewish town. My parents knew each other from their childhood. It was a small town, and all people knew one another well. My parents got married in 1921. They didn't have a wedding party but a religious ceremony. They rented a room in Olevsk. Grandfather Meyer came to live with them. He liked my father a lot, so they had no problem sharing one room. They had no possibility to rent another room anyways. Father continued to trade in live-stock, but this work made little profit.

As long as my grandfather was alive the family strictly observed all religious rules. Cooking for Saturdays had to be done on Fridays, and the meals had to be prepared according to tradition because my grandfather was very religious. Our family followed the kashrut, separated dairy and meat products and the dishes used for them. We made cholent, fruit stew and beans. The number of dishes was based on what we could afford. There had to be chicken broth with golden rings of fat; very rich and delicious. But for the beginning challah and pies had to be baked. My grandmother was very good at making challah. We also boiled milk with chicory. The pot with milk was in the oven for a night, and in the morning, when they took it out, it looked like hot chocolate. After my grandfather died my mother said she wasn't going to make cholent any more. She said to us, 'Go to your grandmother, she'll make it!' Since then our family hardly observed traditions any more.

I was born in 1922, and my sister, Sonia, followed in 1925. My parents bought a house in 1926 sharing the cost with Aunt Eta. We had a bedroom and a dining room but no kitchen. My aunt had a kitchen and two rooms. My parents made a Russian stove in the corner of the dining room to heat the house and cook meals. We also slept on it. My mother was very handy at home. We went to school, and when we came home at two o'clock everything at home was done, and our lunch was waiting for us. My mother did all the housework herself until she fell ill. She had a heart attack in 1932. She couldn't work afterwards. Oksana, a Ukrainian woman, came to help us with the washing. She also made boiled potatoes and sauerkraut for us. She was helping us, and we were

helping her. We were living a modest life. But my father had a talent to do business. During the NEP period in 1927 he decided to do something for the family. He found two partners, and they became fur dealers. I have dim memories of bags with fur at home. My father established contacts with Kishinev and they were sending the fur there. It was a profitable business. Our life improved. We bought furniture and wooden beds. But the good times only lasted less than two years.