

Lev Dubinski's Mother Maria Dubinskaya With Her Friend



My mother, Maria Reizis, on the right, and her friend [name unknown] took this photograph for memory in Belaya Tserkov, 1913.

My mother Maria Reizis was born in 1893 in Belaya Tserkov. My mother was beautiful and smart. She was one of the best pupils in the grammar school in Belaya Tserkov. She finished grammar school with honors. When in 1915 the Pale of Settlement was abolished my grandfather Meyer decided to move his family to Kiev. He wanted his son Moisey to get a good education and arrange successful marriages for his daughters. My parents got married in 1916. They had a Jewish wedding. They installed a chuppah in the yard of the house where Maria lived. The ceremony was conducted by a rabbi from Brodski Synagogue. The newly weds settled down in my mother's parents' apartment on the corner of Prozorovskogo and Saksaganskogo Streets in the center of the town.

We lived in a 4-storied house on the corner of Prozorovskaya and Saksaganskogo Streets in the very center of the city. There were Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian and Polish tenants. My parents were always busy and I spent much time outside playing with other children. We didn't care about nationality. My parents spoke Yiddish at home, particularly, when they were arguing and didn't want us to understand the subject of their discussion. They spoke Russian to Maria and me. My parents spoke Yiddish until the end of their days. My father and mother read many Russian books: they were particularly fond of Russian classics Gorky and Gogol. They spoke fluent Russian too.

My parents were raised in religious families, but they were not religious themselves. They thought there was too much suffering in life and if God existed he wouldn't allow things to happen. They attended synagogue when they were children, but, as my father and mother stated it was a 'childish faith'. My parents didn't observe Jewish traditions. I remember my mother eating brown bread at Pesach - she liked it. She always asked Maria and me 'Please, don't tell your grandmother or grandfather that I've eaten brown bread'. And we kept it a secret. My father liked pork fat and cracklings very much. His breakfast consisted of brown bread with cracklings that he liked through his life. This is the way I remember my parents, but I don't know whether they had different habits before.