

Gherda Kagan's Maternal Grandmother Esphir Zivik With Her Daughters Yulia Oswald And Raisa Zivik-Kagan



This is my maternal grandmother Esphir Zivik with her daughters Yulia Oswald (from the left) and Raisa Zivik-Kagan (from the right). This photo was made in Odessa in 1926. Grandmother Esphir was born in Odessa in 1877. She finished private grammar school. My grandmother was shortsighted and said that she ruined her eyesight reading at night with a candle under a blanket. After October revolution my grandmother was very unhappy about having to cook her first soup at the age of 45 after they lost a cook and wash the staircase in the corridor like all other tenants. Of course, she didn't approve of these "niceties" of Soviet life and having to stand in line to buy food products. During horrible famine in 1921 grandmother Esphir took her family to Druzhelubovka Voznesensk district of Nikolaev region, to a former estate of Odessa artist Nikolay Kuznetsov where she visited when she was young. In 1920 a sovkhos was organized in this estate. They stayed there with their relatives' families for a year, working in the garden, keeping livestock, making brynza and mamaliga and managed to survive. My mother's sister Yulia was born in 1889. She finished private grammar school and was to be awarded a golden medal for her successes. She actually didn't get it for having one '4' for her behavior. Yulia was an unbelievable chatterbox. In 1917 she entered the Medical Faculty of Novorossiysk Emperor University and after graduation she worked as a lung roentgenologist. She married Grigoriy Oswald who had finished the Art College in Odessa and they moved to Moscow. In 1928 their son Victor was born in Moscow. Grigoriy Oswald was a horder by nature. They came to Moscow without any belongings, but soon they had an apartment and a dacha. Aunt Yulia easily spent money and didn't value what they had. They divorced due to this difference of attitudes in 1938. During the war Yulia and her son were in evacuation in Tbilisi. Her husband Grigoriy Oswald perished at the war. His 14-year-old son Victor and his friend decided to go to the front. Militia captured them at a railway station when they were eager to return after they saw so many wounded going by trains. After the war they returned to Odessa. Victor finished Odessa Polytechnic College and got a job assignment in Komsomolsk-on-Amur. Later he moved to Kishinev where he worked as an engineer at a plant. Yulia lived with her son in her last years and died in 1970. Victor died in 1993.