

Laszlo Ringhel's Wife Lea Ringel's Mother Baila Helman



My wife's mother Baila Helman. This photograph was miraculously preserved in their abandoned house after my wife's family was taken to a concentration camp. My wife's sister, who was the first to return home, found it. This photo was taken in Bogdan village Rakhov district in 1920.

After WWII I went to work in the furniture shop in Uzhgorod. I learned to work on the wood treatment lathe. I lived in a room in the shop. I had meals in the town. There was a Red Cross 'Social care' organization in Russkaya Street where they had a canteen to provide meals to those who returned from concentration camps. I met girls and courted many of them there. It was there that I met my future wife Lea Helman, a young girl with big back eyes. We began to meet.

Lea came from Bogdan village [175 km from Uzhgorod, 560 km from Kiev] Rakhov district in Subcarpathia. She was born in 1927. Her Jewish name was Laya. My wife was born Lea, later the Ukrainians made Helena of her. Although in the town some called her Helen at home she was always called Lea. Her father Moishe Helman was a farmer and her mother Beila Helman was a housewife. There were 11 children in the family, but before WWII 9 of them were in Subcarpathia. One died in his teens from a disease. One of Lea's older brothers escaped to England after the Hungarians came to power, during the war he served in the Czechoslovakian Legion in the British army and returned to England after the war. When he got to know that his brothers and sisters returned from the concentration camp he decided to visit them. Soviet authorities arrested him accusing him of espionage and sent him to the GULAG where he perished. The rest of the children were taken to the ghetto in April 1944 and from there they were taken to Auschwitz. Lea's mother and father were exterminated in Auschwitz immediately.