

Leib Redko



This is my father Leib Redko photographed for the family album. This photo was taken in Kiev in 1950. My parents' families lived in the village of Ilinty, Vinnitsa region [285 km from Kiev]. My father Leib Redko, born in 1885. He never told me about his childhood and youth. I don't know anything about his life in his parents' home. His mother tongue was Yiddish. My father must have got some religious education. I don't know whether his brothers or sister went to school. When my father was old enough, he was sent to become an apprentice to a tinsmith. Later my father began to work as a tinsmith. My parents got married in the early 1900s. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. It could have been no different at that time. After the wedding the newly-weds settled down in the small wooden house on the bank of the Bug River, about 20 meters from the bank on Zemskaya Street, where our family lived till 1932. My mother was a housewife after she got married. My father had to support the family. He traveled to neighboring villages looking for work.

He mainly fixed buckets and wash tubs. He didn't earn much and we were poor. We lived from hand-to-mouth. We only had meat on holidays and our everyday food was bread and potatoes. The younger children wore the older children's clothes and shoes. However, we didn't care that much about it since the majority of the population of Ilinty lived that way: Jews and non-Jews. Despite our poverty, my father insisted that all children had education. My father fell severely ill in 1939. There was something wrong with his legs: he couldn't walk and became an invalid. He couldn't work any longer. His doctor, a surgeon, told him there was no cure. My father could barely walk, but he still tried to go out to find some work. It took a long time before he finally got a job as water carrier in the school of assistant doctors. It was too hard for him to work alone there and I helped him. My father didn't get money for this work, but received food cards.