

Rimma Leibert's Stepfather's First Wife Sonia Evenchik With Her Friend



My stepfather's first wife Sonia Evenchik is sitting on the right, her Byelorussian friend Maria is sitting beside her. This photo was taken in Minsk in the late 1930s. Once in 1945 a military man came to the restaurant where my mother was working. He liked my mother and began to come there more often. My father perished during the liberation of Western Ukraine on 16 August 1944. So my mother met Boris Evenchik, who fell in love with her and proposed to my mother. My mother invited him to our home. He spent this evening with us and told us his story. Boris Evenchik was born to a common Jewish family in Moscow. His older brother's name was Iosif and his sister's name was Hana. Boris' mother died in the early 1920s and Boris went to work at an early age. He got fond of playing the tuba at the house of pioneers, when he was a child. Later he learned to play other musical instruments. He turned out to have a talent for music and entered a military music school. After finishing it he became a military conductor. Before the Great Patriotic War Boris, his wife Sonia and their daughters Maya and Lilia lived in Minsk. Boris was conductor of the military orchestra of Byelorussia. On the first days of the war Boris' military unit relocated to the frontline area. I don't know how it happened that his family failed to evacuate. I know that his wife, their two daughters, Iosif, his wife and two children, Hana, her husband and their three children perished during the first actions in Minsk. Boris was at the front through the whole period of the war. He was in Prague, when the war ended. He was awarded an order of Lenin [10](#), Combat Red Banner [11](#) and Red Star [12](#), and had numerous medals. When he returned to Minsk, he found the ashes of his home: a bomb hit the house directly. His friends Yakov and his wife Maria, who were in Minsk during the occupation, told him about the tragedy of his wife, children and relatives. Boris had a hard time telling us his story, but he wanted to tell us all about his background. Mama and Boris got married soon and he moved into our apartment.