

The story of Abraham and Olga Kahn, as told to their great-niece Jo Ann Goldwater by their son, Eugene Kahn.

Abraham Behr (Boris) Leibovitch Kagan (Kahn) was born to Leib (Louis) Smoolovitch Kahn (Kagan) and Raisa (Rosa) Abrahams on June 14, 1870 in Shavli Lithuania. The family went to live in Riga when Abraham was very young and some of his siblings were born there. One brother, Dr. Joseph Kahn, was born in Riga, and became a prominent lawyer in New York City where the family settled in 1891. Dr. Abraham Kahn studied medicine at St. Petersburg and became a well known eye specialist. At university he met Olga Shpakovskaia, the daughter of General Shpakovsky who also was a medical student.

Olga was sentenced to three years in Siberia for teaching the peasants on her father's estate how to read and write. She served about a year and a half, and was released on the condition that she go to the Volga area to treat patients with cholera.

Abraham followed her there and they were married. Olga's father was quite influential, and money poured in when he offered to help the couple open a hospital in Kolomna, near Moscow. Abraham was greatly respected by his patients and when he expressed a wish to visit his parents in New York, a ticket appeared. When his horse and buggy was stolen, one was delivered to his doorstep and a man was seen running away.

At some point Abraham also worked at Kreviakina Hospital. When there was a pogrom and the Tsar's soldiers were looking for a Jew in the town, he was saved by the peasants, and the chief of police advised him to go abroad for six months. Abraham first went to NY in 1901 for a visit. Then he went again in 1908 and stayed for two years. While in NY, he practiced at the Sydenham Hospital.

He returned to Russia in 1910 where he died of typhus in 1912 or 1913. His obituary was written in the Moscow Chronicle on Feb. 7th (I think) and it says that the funeral procession stretched for 40 miles, from Moscow to Kolomna. "The deceased was one of the most distinguished physicians in the province of Moscow. He was considered a great authority among his colleagues as a specialist in diseases of the eye, and was held in great affection by the local population. His fame as an expert eye surgeon spread beyond the province of Moscow and there came to him to be treated patients from the province of Kiazan Tambov and Vladimir. He was an unselfish physician warmly devoted to his duty and deeply loved by his country people."

Olga, who had her own practice for two or three years, 1905-7 died of pneumonia in 1919 or 1920.

Olga and Abraham had three children – twins born in 1901 Nicholas (died 1903) and Valia and Eugene born in 1904. A few years after Olga died, Valia and Eugene left Russia to join their relatives in New York City. While they were in Hamburg, entry to the US was closed, so they decided to go to Montreal, where their aunt, Bertha Kahn Goldwater was living. Unfortunately their luggage was lost, so there are no known photos of Olga.

Eugene stayed in Montreal, but Valia wanted to go to New York, where most of her family was. She was smuggled into the country by a US marshall who was sent by their uncle Joseph Kahn who was a well known lawyer in NY. She went there to live with her aunt, Jennie Kahn Hyman, and to look after her niece and nephew, Rosalie and Jimmy Hyman. She became a US citizen in 1947, following an amnesty by President Roosevelt.

This story was told to me by his son, Eugene, who came to Montreal in the early 1920's.

April 28, 2009

Коллеголюбивая Вашей Мамы. Мой
привет Вашей супруге и детям.

15 февраля 1918г.

Дорогие мои Елизавета Владимировна и сестры
Августа Луиза и Мелани, поздравляю
Вас с праздником Рождества и очень
благодарю Вас за Ваше внимание
и желание сделать нам празднич-
ные подарки. Деньги 25 р. от сестер
и Др. от Вас мы уже получили,
но хотим, чтобы вы сделали нам
на подарки, а на более необходимые
вещи. Думаю, что Вы не будете
этим не довольны. Мелань при-
ходится тратить порядочную часть
нашего бюджета на покупку фран-
цузских. Цена на все продукты
и материи значительно поднялась
и мы хотим дать экономии
и не тратить денег на удовольствия

Теперь в получении аккуратно
и нашь сватается на август и мая-
ту за учение детей. Меньше учится
играть на скрипке а Лена (Ваня)
на форте, это говорит мисс Др в
миссис. Замишские учеников
дети не думают. Не знаю почему
такъ медлено подвигается для
Можетъ быть учиться и много,
а можетъ быть дети ленивы,
и мало способны. Видно они
не будутъ артистами, но в то
это и не претендую. Лишь бы
да они в будущемъ могли играть
для себя и близкихъ людей. Я
давно, давно, не получила письма
отъ сестеръ изъ Нью-Йорка. Разъ
я поехала въ Россію съ заказомъ
письма съ фотографіей памят-
ника Борису и картонкой моего

Вашей. Погуглите ли Вы нас? Хотела
давно пойти писем в Америку, это
давно задумывалось, это писем в
преддуге писем. Ваше писем
но с кем, или больше писем;
не знаю где так долго оно путалось.
Я не уверена, что и это писем по-
ходить к Вам в Москве. У нас
уже летит снег и стоит сонный
путь, но в воздухе уже чувствуется
весна и солнышко греет веселье.
Ваша ходит в гимназию; говорят,
что иль отлучаются раньше в
этом году потому, что гимназии
нужны будут для поминаний
сидеть. А опять поеду на лето
к сестри в Подушкинскую школу,
если ее не займут на лето по
расписанию. Меня за зиму не попра-
вила, но сильно выросла, ему теперь 3

10 $\frac{1}{2}$ минут и ростъ = 2 арш. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ вершка,
онъ очень нервный, судорожный и бледный
мантрыхъ. Ему зиму, по предписанию
врача, пока не найдется широкъ.
У Лили сорочий чирокъ лица, хотя
и она не утратившая ребенка. Въ
домъ носить съ весны ахять надо по-
чистить ремонтъ. Трудно мнѣ
справляться со всеми моими задо-
лгами и долгами. Здоровье какъ,
будто бы лучше теперь. Какъ
Вы живете? Какъ у Васъ плыве
на лето? Примиите нашъ фото-
графіи Вашей маментакаго Абрама
и дочери Лили, мы имъ еще советъ
не знаемъ по наружности. Умно вѣсно
Вамъ много самыхъ лучшихъ
возможностей и поздравляю.

Любовью Васъ

С. Каранъ.