

(The following is a letter written in May 1946 from Bryna Vodovozova (1), of Omsk, Russia, to her Uncle and Aunt, Max and Sarah Rosenberg, in Boston, Mass. Bryna's mother (2) was the sister of Max Holman Rosenberg and Masha Holman Rosenberg, the wife of Joseph Zorach Rosenberg (3). Max emigrated to the United States in 1902 [Max emigrated sometime in the 1890's based on census records, naturalization papers & passport application. Each lists a different year. The ship manifest has not been located as of January 2014] and Masha and Joseph came in 1901.)

3 May 1946

Dear Uncle and Aunt:

I received today your letter and two photos. I'm glad that you are all well. Everything is the same with us. Mother and I miss you. I wrote you then Hannah (4) and her husband left for Chernovitz. She is a doctor, a neurosurgeon, and her husband is an engineer designer (nationality Jewish). Freda (5) left for Zaparosie (in the Ukraine). She is a teacher and her husband is a technician. They have a 2-year old boy. Riva (6) has a son 17 years old and he is studying at the University. Riva's husband is an officer in the Army. They live in Moscow. We don't hear from Rochi (7) any more. That's all for the mishpocha. As far as Volodya (8), we know nothing. As for mother's going to Riva's, I don't know. So far, Riva keeps silent. She won't invite her. Mother won't say anything about it. I have another concern. Mother's toe on the other leg is not OK. It is painful. I called a specialist and there is no clear diagnosis. She cries and she said if she gets gangrene on the other leg, she'd rather die than submit to amputation.

It's dreadful, isn't it. Why are we so unlucky? It is very hard on me and there is no one I can talk to about it (9). Now, about me. My liver is OK. I have hepatitis and attacks of jaundice. What can one do? It is my fate. I wish you and wife and all your children (10) health and happiness and best wishes from my mother.

Your niece,

Bronya

P.S. You wrote about a prosthetic for Mama – whether Riva will do it or not, I don't know. I can dictate what she should do with her money.

To: Max Rosenberg
144 Northampton Street

Boston, Mass, America

From: B. J. Vodovozova
20th Anniversary of the
Red Army Street, No 30
Omsk, USSR

Notes:

1. Bryna was born in 1898, and was 48 when this letter was written. Her maiden name was Styarkin. She apparently spoke (or wrote) German, not English. Her transliteration of her Russian

name used a “w” instead of the English “v” and an “s” instead of the English “z”. Omsk is a large industrial city in Siberia, about 1500 miles east of the Ural Mountains.

2. Bryna’s mother was married in the 1890’s to a Mr. Styrkin. Her, and his first name are not known. In 1946, she was about 70, and apparently had had a leg amputated.
3. Masha Rosenberg died in 1941 and Joseph Rosenberg died in 1934.
4. Hannah may be Bryna’s daughter.
5. Freda may also be Bryna’s daughter.
6. Riva is Bryna’s middle sister, and was 46 years old in 1946.
7. Rochi is Bryna’s younger sister, and was 44 years old in 1946.
8. Volodya may be Bryna’s husband, and may have disappeared during the war.
9. It appears that Bryna is widowed or abandoned, and lives alone with her ailing mother.
10. Max and Sarah Rosenberg, in 1946, had five children; William Rhodes, Edith Friedman, Julius Rhodes, Beatrice Kaplan, and Hilliard Rhodes. The address used was Max’s business, not his home.