

Naum Balan And His Family



This is my family and I. The photo was taken in Tiraspol in 1929, after my parents moved there. First row from left: my paternal grandfather Michael Balan, my brother Abram, my brother Nathan, my maternal grandmother Leya Korsunskaya, nee Lev. Second row from left: my mother Fira Balan, nee Korsunskaya, I, and my father Mark Balan. My maternal grandmother Leya was born in Bobrinets town, Elisavetgrad district, Kherson region in 1870. After they got married my grandparents lived in their own house in Novoukrainka. I don't remember this house. My parents and I went to Novoukrainka, but I was too small to remember any details. My mother told me that my grandparents were very religious. They strictly followed the kashrut and had their poultry slaughtered by a shochet. Their four children were raised religiously. They observed the Jewish traditions and rituals. They spoke Yiddish in the family. In 1922, after the Civil War, Soviet authorities arrested my grandfather for some reason. Grandfather Gersh never returned home and we don't know how he died. The authorities didn't offer any explanation of what had happened. After my grandfather was arrested and gone, my grandmother Leya lived in Novoukrainka alone as

all her children had left their parents' home by then. In 1934 the older children, Godia and Sonia, convinced her to move to Australia where they lived. She lived in her son Godia's house. In 1936 my grandmother died accidentally: she drowned in the bathroom. She probably felt ill, but there was nobody around and she drowned. This happened when she was visiting her daughter Sonia. Grandmother Leya was buried in Perth, Australia. My parents got married in Mostovoye in 1919. I don't know what kind of wedding they had, but knowing my grandfather Michael's religiosity, I would think they had a traditional Jewish wedding. After the wedding the newly-weds spent some time with my mother's parents in Novoukrainka. After a few months, in 1920, the newly-weds moved to Odessa. At first they lived on Chicherin Street in the center of the town, but it turned out to be very cold and they moved to another apartment in Nezhynskaya Street in the same part of the town. My brother Nathan was born in December 1922, Abram followed in 1925 and I was born in 1928. I looked like a girl so much that my mother called me 'meydele' [little girl in Yiddish]. In 1929 my parents moved to Tiraspol where life was not so expensive. My brother Aron was born there in 1930. He died of scarlet fever when he was one and a half years old.