

Gelia Meitina



This is my paternal grandmother Gelia Meitina. The photo was taken by photographer Smith in New York, USA, in 1914 or 1915. My paternal parents lived on Zadonovska Street in the suburb of Vitebsk. My father's parents were middle class, as they would say nowadays. I guess, they were involved in crafts and one of them had something to do with medicine. My father's parents must have been religious people. They attended the nearby synagogue in Vitebsk. I know very little about my paternal grandmother Gelia Meitina. I only have her photograph. She had a beautiful and intelligent face. She was born in 1852 and died in New York in 1919. She emigrated to New York with four of her children before 1915. My father didn't want to go there since he was actively involved in the revolutionary movement here in Russia. My grandfather and grandmother had five

children: three boys and two girls. Regretfully I can't tell you their names or dates of birth or death. I remember that they sent dollars when Torgsin stores were opened. These stores sold food products and other goods for dollars while other stores only accepted Soviet money. I remember that our parents bought my sister a coat with a white collar. My father corresponded with his brother until the early 1930s when it was allowed. After 1937, when the political situation in the Soviet Union was strenuous [during the so-called Great Terror], correspondence with relatives living abroad was dangerous and my father stopped writing to them. He must have been afraid of being arrested and destroyed their photographs. The only photograph I have is of my grandmother and her grave. My father didn't tell me anything about his mother, brothers or sisters. We lost track of them.