Mia Ulman's Grandmother Berta Bravo With Her Granddaughter Kima Ulman

My maternal grandmother was born in the town of Vilno. She was a housewife and raised nine children: Lev, Rakhil, Mikhail, Akim, Tira, Grigory, Nina, Vladimir and Esphir, my mother. All the other children my grandmother gave birth to died as infants. She was illiterate, so my grandfather educated her, taught her how to read and write. She read a lot afterwards, including newspapers and magazines, which my grandfather bought and later subscribed to.

My grandmother wore common clothes: blouses, dresses and skirts of pale colors. She sewed very well, and made clothes for all the children. She also inspired my love for needlework, and I later signed up for dress-making courses. She had a wonderful talent for raising children, everybody obeyed her implicitly. Later all grandchildren were raised by her - she had a good influence on them. In 1947 she got paralyzed and was bound to bed for the next three years. During that time she was lavished with care and attention by her children. She died in 1950.

Kima's father, Grigory, learnt to play the piano at the Conservatory. He met his future wife Lyubov, who was a cellist, there. Besides, he graduated from the Faculty of History of the Leningrad State University and defended his doctoral thesis. They had two daughters, Kima, born in 1930, and Margarita, born in 1936. The name Kima means 'Communist International of Youth', it is an abbreviation in Russian. It was in fashion at the time to give Soviet names to children. Both Kima and Margarita got a higher electrical-technical education and worked as leading experts at the Leningrad Leninets Association until their retirement. In 1996 Kima emigrated with her husband to live with her daughter in Canada. She already had two grandchildren by that time.