

Esphir Kalantyrskaya's Parents: Father Samuil Persov And Mother Bluma Persova



These are my parents: my father Samuil Persov and my mother Bluma. This photo was taken after their wedding in Pochev around 1907.

My father Samuil Persov was born in Pochev in 1875. Like all boys in the family he went to the cheder and then he studied language and basics of mathematic with teachers at home. My father didn't have any document about getting education. But he was an intelligent, well-read and modern man. He followed into his father's steps and became a good jeweler and a watchmaker.

My father was an atheist although he had finished cheder. He was fond of books, read many Russian classic novels, met with young people and emancipated girls and acted in the amateur theater. He didn't date Jewish girls and wasn't going to get married. When he was 32 he allowed matchmakers to find him a fiancée giving in to his parents' begging. My father didn't like anyone in Pochev. He liked emancipated and educated girls. They were not to be found in the distant Pochev. Girls in Pochev had traditional education and only took interest in the family life and religion. They brought him a girl from another town.

My father liked Bluma and they got married in 1907. They didn't tell me any details of their wedding, but it was a traditional Jewish wedding with a huppah and a rabbi. I don't know anything about my mother Bluma. I don't know whether she had brothers or sisters or what her nee name was. The reason I don't know it is that I left my mother and Pochev when I was very young. I know

that her family was much poorer than my father's family. My mother had no education and could hardly read. They spoke Yiddish to one another. However, my mother and father spoke Russian to us. My father spoke fluent Russian and my mother spoke it with an accent. My father insisted that we spoke Russian. My mother was a very religious woman. She prayed, followed the kashruth, lit candles on Saturday, celebrated all Jewish holidays and fasted at Yom Kippur. I have dim memories of these holidays. I found it boring to sit and wait until they finish the ritual and prayer and we could start eating. I don't remember any joyful activities in our house related to religious traditions. There was a synagogue in Pochep.

My parents were very different people. My father was a cheerful modern man, reading newspapers and books and having many books and my mother was a sullen woman, interested in nothing but her house, her children and the God.