

Paya Minkovetskaya, Her Brother Faivish Minkovetskiy And Her Sister Rachil Lerner.



From left to right: my mother Paya Minkovetskaya, her brother Faivish Minkovetskiy and her sister Rachil Lerner. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1927.

My grandmother and grandfather had many children, but most of them died in their infancy. Only three of them survived: mama's older sister Rachil, born in the late 1890s, my mama Paya, born in 1903, and their younger brother Faivish, born in 1907. They spoke Yiddish at home, but also knew Ukrainian and Russian. My mother's family was religious. All children were raised religious. Uncle Faivish finished cheder. Mama and her older sister had a visiting teacher. They could read in Hebrew and read and write in Yiddish. They also received a secular education. They finished a 4-year Jewish school and studied in an 8-year Russian school.

Mama's older sister Rachil married a Jewish man from Mogilyov-Podolskiy. She had a traditional Jewish wedding. Rachil moved to live with her husband. She was a housewife. Her husband Lazar Lerner was an accountant in an office. Their older daughter Bella was born in 1922 and son Abram - in 1932. Mama's younger brother Faivish studied at the accounting course and then worked as an accountant in an office. He was single and lived with his parents.

Mama was eager to study. She studied at a course for junior medical personnel: attendants and medical nurses. Her dream was to enter a medical college, but this dream was not to come true. She studied and worked as an attendant and then medical nurse in the town hospital. Mama loved her job. I don't know how my parents met: whether there was a matchmaker or they met themselves somehow. Anyway, they got married in 1928. My parents had a traditional wedding with a chuppah and a rabbi. Mama and papa rented a little house with one room, a small kitchen and a fore room on a hill in the suburb of Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I was born there in 1935. It moldered in the course of time. This house is still there, though many others in this neighborhood have been removed. I can see it from my window. They fetched water from a nearby well in the street. There was a plot of land near the house, about 10 square meters, and the lady allowed mama to make a small vegetable garden there. Mama liked growing dill, parsley and cucumbers, selecting seeds

and watching her plants grow.

There was a Russian stove where mama cooked in winter and it also heated the house. In summer mama only stoked the stove to bake bread. She cooked on a small stove on 3 legs. Mama baked bread for a whole week on Friday. It was delicious even when it grew stale. Electricity came to Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1948. There were kerosene stoves used to light houses before. Mama basically followed kashrut. We always celebrated Sabbath at home. We celebrated Jewish holidays. My parents went to the synagogue on these days.

My parents spoke Russian to me at home and only switched to Yiddish, when they didn't want me to understand the subject of their discussion.