

Tsyliya Spivak's Aunt Zelda Lifshitz



In this photograph taken in Chernigov in 1935 my mother's sister Sarrah was photographed after her wedding with Ziama Aronov.

My mother came from a big Jewish family living in Sednevo town in Chernigov province, 200 km from Kiev. I've never been to Sednevo, but my mother told me that it was like any other small Jewish town. There was a synagogue in the town. Jews commonly dealt in crafts and trade. My mother's father Borukh Kaplan, my grandfather, was a tradesman. My grandmother Tsyvah, who was 12 years younger than my grandfather, was a housewife and looked after the children. Sometimes she helped my grandfather in the store in the house where the family lived. They didn't have any other employees working for them in the store. They were selling haberdashery and household goods in their little store and Ukrainian customers of my grandfather from surrounding villages often came by my grandfather's store to buy what they needed. My grandfather got along well with Ukrainians. In 1919 his big family moved to Chernigov [regional center in the north of Ukraine, 220 km from Kiev] after selling their remaining belongings. In Chernigov my grandfather bought a small two-bedroom apartment in a private house where they lived until before the Great Patriotic War. My grandmother and grandfather were very religious people. They ate kosher food and celebrated Sabbath. The whole family got together on big religious Jewish holidays. There were 12 children born to the family, but before the Great Patriotic War there were seven of them left. The rest of the children died in infancy.

My mother's sister Zelda was born around 1915. Zelda didn't have a good education, but she was a Komsomol member, trade union activist and held rather high public posts. Before the war Zelda met with Yakov Lifshitz, a nice Jewish guy. They loved each other very much, but they

argued about some little thing and separated. Zelda married another Jewish guy to spite Yakov. His name was Yakov Shulman. They had a son named Roman. Zelda's husband Yakov perished at the front. After finishing his college Yakov Lifshitz was sent to work at a military plant in Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur [over 7000 km from Kiev] in the Far East. After the war he found Zelda and convinced her to marry him. Yakov took Zelda and Roman to Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur. Besides Roman Zelda and Yakov raised Ziama's daughter Fania and then my mother younger sister's daughter Irina. After finishing school Roman entered Odessa Polytechnic College and after finishing it he received a job assignment to Kishinev. Aunt Zelda and her husband followed him there. Zelda died in 1982. Yakov didn't remarry for a long time, but then he got married and moved to Israel. Roman and his family also live there.