

Joseph Shapochnik With His Mother Dvoira Shapochnik And Relatives



This is my paternal grandmother Dvoira Shapochnik in a black shawl; the first to the right is my father Joseph Shapochnik. I don't know the others. This is the only picture of Grandmother Dvoira. The picture was taken in some resort area in 1924.

My paternal grandmother was born in Leovo in 1878. My grandparents got married in 1895. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. It couldn't have been any different. Then, after the wedding they settled in Leovo. Haim and Dvoira had a small house with a thatched roof. They were neither rich nor poor. They had five children in the family, who had to be fed, clad, and educated. I've never been to Leovo. My father told me about them. I saw Grandmother Dvoira only once, when she came over in 1937. She was a large, debonair woman. Her head was covered with a beautiful knit kerchief. My grandmother never went out with her head uncovered. Both she and Grandfather Haim were very religious. My grandfather also wore a hat. In the mornings he put on a kippah, tallit and tefillin when he was praying. Grandmother Dvoira died in 1938. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Leovo.

My father, Joseph Shapochnik, was born in 1902. He was the only one of the brothers who had thirst for knowledge and striving to get educated. Upon finishing cheder my father entered the nearest Realschule in Leovo. Gagauz, Moldovans and Russians mostly studied there. Several Jewish boys made friends and decided to go on with their education. By that time Bessarabia had been annexed to Romania and my father dreamt of studying in one of the European universities. Grandfather Haim scraped up some money for him to get to university with a lot of difficulty. That

was the only thing he could help his son with. My father and three or four of his friends, I don't remember their names, went to Prague, and entered the Prague Polytechnic Institute, electric and mechanic department. The friends shared an apartment and saved money that way. They had to work to get by.