

Mira Dernovskaya's Paternal Relatives, The Dernovskys



This is my father's family, the Dernovskys. The photo was taken in Novorzhev in 1928.

The picture was taken in the Filimonov photo studio. One can see that the sitting people hold plants in flowerpots in their hands - such was the studio's interior.

In the foreground on a bench sits the small son of father's sister Milya, he is about three years old here.

Sitting in the second row from right to left: father's sister Milya; their brother Bentse, unmarried then; their father, my grandfather Haim Yankel Dernovsky; Milya's daughter Ira, born 1924; father's mother, my grandmother Sora Gita Dernovskaya.

Standing in the third row from right to left: Milya's husband Grigory, father's sister Lea, unmarried at that time; my father Grigory and my mother Haya.

My paternal grandmother and grandfather lived in Novorzhev, though people say that my grandfather was from Polish Jews. My grandfather on my father's side, Haim Yankel Dernovsky, (his folks called him Yasha) was born at the end of the 1850s in Novorzhev, Pskov province.

He was a tailor. Having completed his term in the army, he married at the end of the 1880s a young girl, Sora Gita, also from Novorzhev.

My grandmother was born at the beginning of the 1870s in Novorzhev, and she was a housewife. I don't know how they got acquainted. Grandfather and she didn't have children for five years after the wedding.

Then a boy was born, but he died as a baby of diphtheria. After that they had no children for a few years. At last, in 1897, Sora gave birth to twins: my father and his sister Malke. In total there were seven kids in the family, four brothers and three sisters: my father and his twin sister, Bentse born in 1899, Milya born in 1901, Lea born in 1903, Eugene born in 1906 and Henah born in 1908.

Grandfather and grandmother were religious people. They observed all Jewish traditions, like all their Jewish neighbors. I don't know for certain, but I guess that they knew Yiddish and spoke this language amongst themselves, went to the synagogue and celebrated all Jewish holidays at home.

I remember that there was usually was a crowd of people in the house, friends, guests and neighbors. They were such cheerful and happy people, a large and amicable family.

I can't describe their life in detail - they didn't tell me, and I didn't ask. Grandmother Sora Gita died in 1936 in Novorzhev, and I was seven years old then and lived in Leningrad, so what could I ask?

Grandmother is buried in Novorzhev in the Jewish cemetery.