

Bertha Gurvich



My mother's sister Bertha Gurvich after finishing grammar school in 1916 in Rostov-on-Don.

My mother's parents, Boris and Cecilia Gurvich, lived in Rostov-on-Don, an industrial and cultural town in Russia [900 km from Kiev], outside the Pale of Settlement. The majority of the town's population was Russian, but there were also Jewish families there. My grandfather, a merchant of Guild I, owned a garment store and a tailor shop. The family lived on the second floor of the same building in a beautiful apartment. My grandparents had two children: my mother Cecilia and her sister Bertha. Their parents could afford to give them a good education. Although they were not very religious, my grandparents tried to keep and observe Jewish traditions and celebrate Jewish holidays. They also followed the laws of kashrut. On Saturdays my grandfather's store and shop were closed. He didn't work on this day.

My mother's sister Bertha, born in 1900, studied at the Odessa Polytechnic Institute and became a chemist. Her husband, Michael Serper, was a doctor, a specialist in skin diseases. During the Great Patriotic War he was at the front. Bertha and her daughter Valia were in evacuation. After Michael demobilized from the army their family lived in Zhytomir for many years. Valia died of cancer when she was young, and Bertha died in 1980.