

Semyon Gun's Family And Relatives



This is my family. Sitting from left to right: my father's brother Isaac Gun, my father brother Misha's son Lyova Gun, my paternal grandmother Brucha Gun, my paternal grandfather Shlyoma Gun and I, Semyon Gun. Standing from right to left: my father Anatoli Gun, my mother Fira Gun, my father's brother Efim Gun, his wife Manya, my father's brother Misha Gun and his wife Raya. This photo was taken in Borshchagovka in 1940. This photo was taken on the occasion of the sons and their families visiting their parents' home.

My paternal grandfather Shlyoma Gun was born in Borshchagovka in 1874. We spent our summer in Borshchagovka in 1938-1940. I was 4, 5 and 6 years old, accordingly, and only have dim memories about those years. I remember grandfather Shlyoma with his tapeline around his neck, wearing a waist-shirt and a kind of a tie and trousers with suspenders. He always wore a yarmulka.

He had a beard. He smoked a pipe, even when he was working. I remember well how my grandfather came onto the threshold of his house with a huge antediluvian iron with charcoal. He brandished with it and sparkles were flying from the iron. I liked it very much. I liked watching him ironing through a wet cloth that generated steam. He put the iron on a brick on his desk. I remember that my grandfather was cheerful: he used to tease me, often smiled and joked. Grandfather and his family lived in a rather primitive stone house. The roof was covered with a thick layer of brushwood and straw. There was a big stack on the roof. There was a well in the yard, a shed where they kept a cow and a horse and a vegetable garden near the house. I am not sure how many rooms there were in the house. There was my grandfather's shop and the next room had a stove. In the evening there was a kerosene lamp burning in it. There were chairs and long benches by the wall in this room. The family had dinner at a big table in the room. The house was by the side of a road in the outskirts of the town. There was a forest nearby. There was also a river near the house. When my father's brothers came to Borshchagovka in summer we went swimming and rowing. Grandfather stayed at home. He spoke Yiddish to grandmother and with us they spoke Russian using Jewish and Ukrainian words. I don't know whether my grandparents had any education. I don't know whether they went to synagogue, either. I don't know whether there was a synagogue in Borshchagovka. However, I am sure that my grandfather was a religious man since my father was raised religious.

My paternal grandmother Brucha was born in 1879. I don't know her maiden name or place of birth. I remember that she was a short fatty woman. She wore dull-colored clothing. I remember her gray-and-black skirts. She always wore a gray or flowered kerchief. I was a poor eater in my childhood and my grandmother made me eat cereals or carrot pancakes. For this reason she seemed strict to me while my grandfather always took my side. I think my grandmother was as religious as my grandfather Shlyoma.

Grandfather Shlyoma, grandmother Brucha, their daughter Sonia, her husband and their child were killed by Germans in Borshchagovka during the Great Patriotic War in 1941. After the war my father's brother Isaac went to Borshchagovka. He talked with people. Eyewitnesses told him that German troops occupied the village in September. They shot all Jewish population and hanged those who resisted. They were buried there, but there are no graves. I don't know by what reason our family didn't go to Borshchagovka in summer 1941, but this rescued us. Shlyoma and Brucha had five sons and a daughter. There were all born in Borshchagovka