

Anna Ivankovitser's Maternal Grandparents And Their Family



This is a photo of the family of my maternal grandparents, Iosif and Leya Schigol. Seated in the first row (left to right): my grandmother, my mother's brother Motl Schigol and my grandfather. Standing in the top row (left to right): my mother's sister Etl, my mother's brother Gershl Schigol, and my mother, Mina Ivankovitser. The photo was taken in Polonoye in 1915. My grandfather was a construction materials supplier. Theirs was a wealthy family. My grandmother gave birth to 12 children, six of which died in infancy. The surviving children were three daughters and three sons. Their oldest daughter, Esther, was born in 1890. Etl was born in 1892. The next two were sons: Gershl, born in 1894, and another boy, born in 1895. My mother, Mina, was born in 1897 and the youngest child, Motl, was born in 1900. The boys went to cheder and the girls must have been taught at home. My mother knew Hebrew well and she could read and write both in Hebrew and Yiddish. All of the children received religious and secular education as well. My mother and her brothers and sisters finished an 8-year grammar school. My mother always helped us with our geography and history homework. She also knew Russian, Jewish and German literature well. My mother's sisters moved to America before the Revolution of 1917. Esther was the first to go. She was a communist and was involved in revolutionary activities. Etl followed her to California about a year later. She was a professional photographer. Etl's fiancé had left with Esther and was waiting for Etl to join him. He became a farmer and they specialized in egg production. They had two daughters. I don't remember their names. They graduated from university and became professors in oceanology. Etl wanted her parents to come to America. She wrote them that she would send them an invitation. My grandfather didn't want to go. He didn't know what he would do there. They wrote to one another before the war. I still have Etl's letters to her mother in Yiddish.

Gersh and another brother lived in their own houses in Polonoye. Gersh perished in Polonoye. He and his family was killed, shot by the Germans in 1941. Motl, the youngest, moved to the small town of Murafa near Shargorod and worked at the mill there. From among my mother's siblings who didn't go to America, only Motl survived the war. He and his wife and their children stayed alive. Motl died of cancer in 1957. My mother was born in Polonoye, in Khmelnytskyi province, in 1900. My parents married in 1921. I don't know whether they had a wedding party. It was a difficult time in the country. By that time my mother's brothers got married and left their parents' house. My grandparents remained alone in their house. They wanted to have at least one of their children living with them. My parents settled down at my mother's parents' house. Mama told me that my grandmother did the housekeeping and wouldn't allow my mother to do anything around the house. She told her that she would have her share of housework in her life and she might as well take some rest while she could afford it.