

## Bella Kisselgof 's Grandmother Riva Dreitser-Rivkina's Family



This photo of the Dreitser and Rivkin families was taken in Dnepropetrovsk in 1905. Sitting from left to right: Haislova, the sister of my grandmother Riva Rivkina; Haislova's husband; Luba, another sister of my grandmother; my great-grandfather, Gedalia Dreitser; my great-grandmother, Bruha Dreitser; and my grandfather Shymon Rivkin. Standing in the top row: The husband of my grandmother's sister Sonia; Sonia; the husband of another of grandmother's sisters - I don't remember her name--she is beside him; and my grandmother, Riva Dreitser-Rivkina. I know much more about my mother's family than about my father's. My grandmother told me a lot about her parents. I have photos of my great-grandparents. My great-grandfather's name was Gedalia Dreitser. He was born in the late 1830s. His parents lived in Novo-Vitebsk. He was the youngest of many sisters and brothers, but I don't know how many children were in their family. When Gedalia reached the age of 18, he went into the tsarist army as a private. The term of service was 25 years. When it was his time to retire he got a house with furniture and all utilities built in Novo-Vitebsk for him, all paid for by the tsarist treasury. It was a usual thing at that time. The soldiers retired when they were about 43 years old and they were to start their life anew. And the tsarist government made all necessary provisions for them to begin their civil life. They could choose where they wanted to settle down. My great-grandfather chose Novo-Vitebsk to be near his family. After he came to Novo-Vitebsk he married a young girl named Bruha. I don't know any details about how they met or about their wedding. They started having children almost every year or every year and a half. The oldest was their daughter Haislova, born in 1875. Then there was another daughter born in 1877. My grandmother Riva was born in 1878, and in 1879 their daughter Luba (Liebe) was born. The youngest was Sonia, born in 1881. My grandfather Shymon Rivkin was born in 1870. I know little about his family. He had several brothers. At age thirteen, the boys were to study a profession. After my grandfather had his bar mitzvah, his father offered him a choice of three professions - shoemaker, tailor or blacksmith. My grandfather chose the profession of blacksmith. At first he was an apprentice, and then an assistant until he became a very good blacksmith. When

he started earning enough money to provide for the family he married my grandmother Riva (maiden name - Dreitser).