

Zinaida Leibovich's Mother's Parents: Haya-Surah And Haim Altman And Her Mother Shprintse Altman



This is a portrait of my mother' Shprintse Altman at the age of 20, and her parents: Haya Surah and Haim Altman. This photograph was taken in Kamenets-Podolsk in 1939 before my mother's marriage. My grandfather Haim Altman fought on the side of the Reds in the civil war. He was wounded during one of the combat actions against the White Polish army. As a result, he lost his leg and returned home to Kamenets-Podolsk. This happened some time in 1918. Afterward my grandfather learned to make shoes and became a shoemaker in a shop. The family's living standards fell, but they didn't get upset. They supported each other and did their best to survive. They continued to celebrate all the Jewish holidays and attend synagogue. On Friday my grandmother always lit a candle, and on Saturday her Ukrainian neighbor came to help around the house and take care of the poultry yard and cattle. My grandmother always made matzo at Pesach

and even sold some to her Jewish neighbors. At home my grandmother and grandfather spoke Yiddish, and my mother knew Yiddish very well, too. My mother was born in Kamenets-Podolsk in 1919. The local rabbi issued her birth certificate, and we still have it. My mother went to a common kindergarten with both Ukrainian and Jewish kids in it. The teacher treated all the children very well. My mother told me that later she began to work around the house, helping her mother. My mother attended secondary school for eight years and also attended music school. There was a piano at my grandfather's house. My mother had a very good sense of music and used to sing very well. She had quite a few friends ? both Russian and Jewish. She graduated from music school and worked as a kindergarten music teacher. Actually, she had several professions. She completed a short-term course for medical nurses in 1936 and worked as a nurse in hospital for some time in 1936 ? 1939. She also completed studies at an accounting school in the 1940s and got a job of assistant accountant at the Tractor Manufacture and Sales Company.