

Haya-Sore Tsivian With Her Grandson Yakov Israelson



This photograph shows my paternal grandmother, Haya-Sore Tsivian, and her grandson, Yakov Israelson. It was taken in the summer of 1916, which Yakov spent at his grandmother's in Riga. Grandma Haya-Sore was pretty even in her old age, and she was an unapproachable beauty in her youth. She told us how long it had taken her to choose a husband and her father had been very annoyed by this. Every one of grandma's sisters had families of their own at the age of 14 or 15,

but she did not marry until she was 18. She became a widow early in life and was left alone with a whole flock of children after her husband died. In order to maintain her family she started baking. This kind of business was not very profitable; her family was very poor, the children were often sick. My grandmother had twelve children, but some of them died in infancy and some died later. In the 1930s only four of grandmother's children were still alive - my father and his three sisters: Sofia, Dina, and Asne. At that time, Grandma Haya-Sore lived in Riga [Latvia] with the family of her youngest daughter Asne Fain. Grandma Haya-Sore, her family, her children, and their families were very religious. They strictly observed the kashrut , kept Sabbath and celebrated all the Jewish holidays according to Jewish traditions. In my grandma's house everyone spoke only Yiddish. In the summer of 1941 the entire Fain family and grandma Haya-Sore remained in Riga and died in the Holocaust. Grandmother's elder daughter, Sofia Israelson, nee Tsivian, moved from Latvia to St. Petersburg before the Revolution of 1917 and lived there - in Soviet Leningrad - until 1941. She had one son, Yakov, who graduated from a technical institute in Leningrad and worked there as an engineer. In 1941 he was drafted to the army and died in combat action in the first months of the war.