

Avrom-Yankev And Genia Abramovich



This is my maternal grandfather, Avrom-Yankev Abramovich, and my grandmother, Genia Abramovich. They were photographed in Kopyl in 1936. I knew my mother's family much better than my father's. We lived in the same house with my mother's parents before the evacuation. My grandfather was born in Kopyl in 1869. He was a religious man, which wasn't surprising because he was a rabbi in Kopyl. He was a respectable man. People often addressed him to ask his advice. Visitors were very often waiting for him at the gate early in the morning. My grandfather always wore a long black jacket and a black hat no matter what the weather was like. He had a nicely trimmed beard. My grandmother, grandfather and their children didn't look like Jews. They were tall, fair-haired and had gray eyes. My grandmother was only one year younger than my grandfather, but she looked much younger. She was born in Kopyl in 1870. She often told me about her childhood. Unfortunately, I can hardly remember those stories. I only remember one story about her mother, who was a well-known healer. She cured people with herbs. My grandmother told me that her mother was very upset that her daughters didn't want to follow into her footsteps. My great-grandmother died taking her secrets into the grave with her. I was very sorry that she didn't live until I was born. I would have listened to her every word. I don't know my grandmother's maiden name or anything about her meeting with my grandfather and their wedding. Only, knowing my grandfather, I'm sure that they had a traditional Jewish wedding. They spoke Yiddish in the family. My grandparents lived in a big spacious house with five rooms and a big kitchen. There was a big yard and a flower garden, as well as a shed, where they kept a cow, and a vegetable garden. They were quite wealthy, I believe. My grandmother did all the housework herself. My grandparents strictly observed Jewish traditions. On Friday my grandmother lit the candles and cooked dinner for Saturday. She baked deliciously smelling challah. My grandfather went to the synagogue every day; my grandmother went on Saturdays. They strictly followed the kashrut. They celebrated Jewish holidays. I remember preparations for Pesach. The house was always clean, but before Pesach it had to be all shiny. They took fancy dishes from the attic and washed them. I remember those dishes. I especially remember the bright turquoise salt-cellar. I was mesmerized by it. I remember big bags of matzah that were brought from the bakery at the synagogue. I also

remember the big table covered with white cloth and family gatherings on Pesach. My grandmother and my mother spent a lot of time in the kitchen before Pesach to have all the required food on the table on Pesach. I can't remember all the dishes. We, kids, couldn't wait until they were over with chicken broth, stuffed fish, stuffed chicken neck, etc. to take to my grandmother's strudels with jam, nuts and raisins that melted in the mouth. We preferred these to all other Pesach dishes.