

Froim Usatinskiy's ID Card



This is my father Froim Usatinskiy's identity card. It reads: 'In this photograph is middle class resident of Ilinty town, Litin district, Froim Usatinskiy. He is subject to recruitment to the army, 2nd November 1911'. I think this may be some kind of military identity card, but I know that my father did not serve in the tsarist army. My father was born in Gaisin in 1890. He was the oldest son. It was traditional in Jewish families to give older children, boys in particular, good education. My father got his Jewish education at cheder like everybody else. Then he finished a grammar school. My father was an intelligent man and earned his living as a private teacher. He taught reading, writing and arithmetic to Jewish children preparing them for grammar school. My father

told me very little about his youth because my mother, Freida Pivchik, was his second wife and jealous about anything associated with the time when my father lived with his first wife. I know that his first wife's name was Beila and my father must have been very much in love with her. They had two children: Nuchim, born in 1917, and Maria, born in 1920. Maria was born at the height of the Civil War. Once my father, Beila, Nuchim and little Maria were hiding in a cellar during a pogrom. Beila caught a cold that resulted in galloping consumption (which was the name for tuberculosis at that time). She died at the beginning of 1922. My father was having a hard time after his first wife died. He needed to earn his living and take care of the children at the same time. He met my mother in 1923. Their meeting was arranged by matchmakers. My parents got married in Gaisin in 1923. They were both religious. They had a chuppah and were married by a rabbi. They didn't have a wedding party because it was my father's second marriage and his relatives, especially his brother Yudko, who lived in Lugansk were against it. It wasn't because of my mother that they didn't want this marriage to take place, but nevertheless my father stopped his relationship with his brother back then. He didn't want to stay in Gaisin, probably to avoid gossip. After they got married my parents moved to the small town of Ilinty, Litin district, near Gaisin.