

Fanya's Relative



This is Genya, she was born in 1903. The photo is dated approximately 1933.

Grandpa died and the Slutsky family moved to Kiev. Grandma stayed with her daughters and brother at 4 Basseynaya Street. It was a single-floor building, where they occupied a three-room apartment without any facilities and with a Russian stove. Grandma was illiterate and looked after the house. Her favorite work was to sort out pepper and make pillows. She did not attend the synagogue, never wore a wig, however, she observed all ceremonies. Grandma kept everything kosher in her household; there was even a butcher, a shochet in the yard, who cut chicken on

Fridays. Grandma cooked challah every Friday. She baked it in a Russian stove in a special form and it was not twist-shaped. At 5 o'clock Grandma lit the candles, prayed, but there was no family gathering – no Sabbath. The whole family usually gathered only for Jewish holidays, which Grandma always celebrated. I spoke to her in Yiddish. When in 1933 we were not able to buy matzah because it was very expensive, I cooked it for Grandma myself. Mother's brothers and sisters' weddings were celebrated according to the tradition – with a chuppah.

The siblings and cousins lived in peace and friendship. Everyone had a big family. All families observed the Jewish way of living. There were no Party members in the family. We were closely in touch and met for holidays, weddings as well as when visiting friends. We were great friends with my father's cousin, Shloima Maryanchik and rented a summer house together in Svyatoshen. Such gatherings were very cheerful. I remember huge tables covered with plentiful viands, especially during summer time. The children helped adults to set the table and carry the dishes. Children were fed first, so when grownups had their meal, children already played in the yard.

After Kiev was liberated I made an inquiry to the District Soviet about my relatives who stayed in Kiev during the war. I knew that all the Jews, who stayed in Kiev at the beginning of the war, were perished in Babi Yar. My mother, father, grandmother Rivka, two of her sisters and her grandson perished there in 1941. I do not know exactly how my parents died. However, I know that it happened in Babi Yar, because our former neighbors (Russians) told me about it. My relatives' names are not written anywhere. Though someone told me that he saw their names in some museum, but I couldn't find them in the books. On my visit to Israel I made an inquiry in Yad Vashem, where all Jews, who died during the Holocaust, are being registered. I never received a reply from them.