

## **Dora Puchalskaya's Paternal Grandmother Riva Gitman And Cousins Michael And Yakov Geller**



This is my paternal grandmother Riva Gitman with her daughter Bertha's children: Michael, the older one standing, and the younger Yakov Geller. This photo was taken in Zhmerinka in the 1950s

on the occasion of her grandchildren visiting her.

My father's parents Yakov (Yankel in the Jewish manner) and Riva Gitman lived in Litin, in the center. They were born in Litin in the 1880s. They got married some time in 1905. Their wedding was prearranged by a matchmaker, which was customary for Jewish families. I don't have any information about their families or my grandmother's maiden name. My grandparents had five children. Grandmother Riva was a housewife. My father told me that they observed all traditions and kashrut. They observed Sabbath and Jewish holidays. My grandfather didn't work on Saturdays. My grandmother and grandfather went to synagogue on Saturday and high holidays and fasted on the Day of Atonement. My grandfather wore a hat or a cap and my grandmother wore a kerchief that was a customs with Jews. However, they were not fanatically religious. My father and his brothers studied at cheder. Their parents gave their children an opportunity to determine their priorities in life and make up their own decisions.

My father's younger sister Bertha - she was usually called Bella -, born in 1912 was everybody's favorite in the family. In the late 1930s she married a Jewish man and moved to Leningrad where her husband lived. In spring 1941 Bella came to Zhmerinka to have her baby. She was there, when the war began. She, grandfather and grandmother and Fania's family evacuated to Bugulma. Fania's son Michael was born there in 1941. Bella's husband perished at the front. In 1945 she married her husband's friend who was in love with her. They moved to Leningrad. Bella had her second husband's last name of Geller. In 1946 their son Yakov Geller was born. Bella died in Leningrad in the 1970s. Michael finished a technical school and Yakov finished a College of Economics in Ternopol. They've moved to the USA with their families. I've had no contacts with them.