

Leib Kogan With Relatives



This is a photo of my father Leib Kogan and our relatives. The photo was taken in Odessa in 1912, in order to be sent to my mother to a recreation center in Puscha-Voditsa near Kiev.

In 1907 my mother gave birth to a boy, but he was very weak and had rachitis, and died in 1912. My mother had a nervous breakdown and my father sent her to a recreation center to improve her nervous system.

My aunt Hanna Itzkovich (sitting first from left) was the wife of my mother's cousin Semyon. Hanna was a seamstress. Seamstresses at that time made shirts and decorated women's underwear with lace. My mother learned all this from Aunt Hanna.

My father (sitting first from right) studied at cheder for three years. After my grandmother died he went to work as a servant for a wealthy Jew in the town. In the late 1880s, when he was 15, he moved to some relatives in Odessa. He became an apprentice of a typesetter at the printing house of the publisher Kozman. My father was eager to study somewhere, but he was too poor. However, by self-education he learned Russian, German and some French besides Yiddish and Hebrew. In a few years he managed to get a job as a typesetter at the same printing house. He met my mother in the early 1900s. My parents got married around 1905. I am sure that they had a traditional Jewish wedding since both of them came from religious families and were raised religiously.

My mother's brother Semyon Kogan (standing on the right) was born in 1885. He was a clerk at a fabric store in Odessa. He was married. His wife's name was Clara. They had a daughter, Mura. During the Soviet period Semyon was a supply agent. He traveled to Germany before Hitler came

to power. When we talked about the persecution of Jews in Germany in the 1930s uncle Semyon said he didn't understand what was happening to the Germans. He said he couldn't believe what was said. He said, 'This may just be propaganda.' During the Great Patriotic War uncle Semyon stayed in Odessa. He was killed during a raid after the Romanian headquarters' was blasted in 1941. Clara and Murah perished in the ghetto.

My mother's half-sister Fenia (standing in the middle) was born in 1899. She came from Rotmistrovka, Kiev province, to Odessa when she was 13. Like my mother she was religious. She lived with my parents at the beginning. She was my mother's assistant at work. In 1928 she became a seamstress at a garment shop. During the war she was in evacuation. She was married but had no children. Her husband died in 1951 and she died in the early 1960s.

Grigory Shwalboim (standing first from left) was the husband of my mother's sister Polia, an owner of a small fabric store. They had two children: Musia and Lyonia. In 1925 Grigory moved to Palestine following his brothers. Uncle Grigory was going to take his family there after he had settled down, but shortly after he had gone the borders were closed and we didn't receive any letters from him. Aunt Polia and her children stayed in the Soviet Union. We heard about Uncle Grigory in the late 1960s. His son Lyonia visited him in Israel. Aunt Polia died in 1975. Musia left for Israel in 1975 to join her father, who died shortly afterward.