

Genia Weisenberg With Her Brothers And Friends



Upper row from left to right: my mother's older brother, a tailor, living in Luchinets, my mother Genia Gempeld, my mother's younger brother Mikhail Gempeld. I don't know these two women in the foreground. My mother might have mentioned them, but I can't remember. This photo was taken in Ozarintsy in 1919.

Mama's parents came from the Jewish town of Ozarintsy near Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I think that my grandfather Yevzel Gempeld and my grandmother Fania were born some time in the late 1860s. My grandfather was a tailor. Before the revolution of 1917 he owned a small shop, which was expropriated after the revolution and my grandfather did sewing at home. His younger son Mikhail assisted him. My grandmother was a housewife, which was quite common for Jewish women. They had many children, but they all left their parents' home before I was born. During the Civil War some of my mother's brothers and sisters moved to the USA. There were no contacts with them, and mama never told us anything about them. Mama was born in 1901. I also knew mama's older brother, whose name I don't remember, her older sister Riva, born in 1898, and her younger brother Mikhail, Moishe in Jewish, born in 1909, the youngest child in the family. He was single and lived with my grandparents in Ozarintsy. Mama's older brother learned tailor's vocation from his father. He lived with his family in Luchinets village, was married and had two sons. I don't remember his wife or children's names since we did not communicate.

All Jews in Ozarintsy were religious. Even when the Soviet regime struggled against religion, Jews never gave up observing Jewish traditions they went to the synagogue, celebrated Sabbath and Jewish holidays at home. The younger generation was not so religious or even gave up religion.

Mama told me that she always wanted to leave Ozarintsy for a big town. Of course, Mogilyov-Podolskiy can hardly be called a big town, but my mother, a common Jewish girl from a small Jewish village, found it attractive. After the revolution she moved to Mogilyov-Podolskiy. I don't know whether my mother had any education at all: she could hardly read words or write her own

surname. She was looking for a job and was offered a job of housemaid in a Jewish family. Mama worked for few families doing shopping, cleaning and baby sitting for them. I don't know how she met my father. Mama hardly ever told me about her life. My parents got married in 1922. They were both poor, and a big wedding party was out of the question. There was a chuppah installed in the yard of my mother parents' house, and then my grandmother made a small wedding dinner with my mother and father's relatives. After the wedding my parents returned to Mogilyov-Podolskiy. They rented half of a small house in the center of Mogilyov-Podolskiy, in the Jewish neighborhood.