

Vera Dreezo's Grandmother Dvoira Michailovskaya



My grandmother Dvoira Michailovskaya, photographed before her wedding. Kiev, late XIX century.

My maternal grandmother's name was Dvoira Mikhailovskaya. I was given the name of Vera after her. Our names sound alike. I don't know when my grandmother was born, when she married Iosif Mikhailovski or whether she had any education. I don't know where she came from or where her parents came from. My mother told me that before the Revolution her father Iosif Mikhailovski was

selling hay and had horses for transportation. He was a wealthy man, but of course, after the Revolution and Civil War Soviet authorities expropriated his horses.

After my grandmother and grandfather got married they lived in my grandfather's house in Kiev, in Solomenka near where my great grandfather lived. The first floor was made of stone and the second floor was wooden, but plastered. I remember us climbing squeaking stairs with handrails leading to the second floor. There were such small rooms in the house. My grandfather rented out the first floor at the time when I remember before the Great Patriotic War, and his family lodged on the 2nd floor. Grandmother Dvoira had eight children. Two children died in infancy and one boy died in his teens. I don't know their names. Five children survived: Michael, my mother Ghita, Meyer, Ethel and Lyolia. They are all gone. My grandfather gave education to his children. The boys studied at a realschule in Kiev and the girls studied in a grammar school. By the way, my grandfather paid for his three daughters and for three Christian girls whose parents were poor.

Their family wasn't religious. They spoke Russian and didn't celebrate even the biggest holidays, although I wouldn't be that sure about it. I guess my grandfather's 25-year service played its role. He may have forgotten all rules when he was in the army. My grandmother had a housemaid to help her around the house. Besides, the children had a nanny. My mother told me little about her childhood and her brothers and sisters.

Grandmother died of typhoid in 1916 when my mother was 12.