

Faina Gheller At The Jewish Cemetery In Chernovtsy



The grave of my maternal grandmother at the Jewish cemetery in Chernovtsy.

Standing on the left: Nazik Chait, son of Faina Chait, my aunt, my mother's sister, my uncle, my mother's brother Arkadi (Abram) Weisman, his wife Raisa Weisman.

Standing on the right: my aunt, my mother's sister Faina Chait, (nee Weisman), my aunt, my mother's sister Bella Weisman and her son Michael.

This photo was made on the day my grandmother died a year before in Chernovtsy in 1956.

My maternal grandmother Basia-Yonta Weisman was presumably born on the outskirts of Kamenets-Podolsk in Ukraine [about 1500 km from Moscow] in 1879. She came from a family with many children.

As I understood from what my aunts and mother said she was the only daughter from her father's first marriage and the rest of the children were her stepbrothers and sisters. I don't know when or for what reason her mother died. My mother was a small child and could hardly remember her mother.

My grandmother's father must have remarried shortly after his wife's death. My grandmother's stepmother was a Jewish woman. They began to have their own children.

The family was poor and to get rid of my grandmother her stepmother made her marry the first man that proposed to her: he was a lame redhead Jew that came from Austria. I don't know any details about how my maternal grandfather Mendel Weisman, born in 1873, moved to Russia from Austria.

One way or another he occurred to be there and my grandmother married him at the age of 16. They treated each other with respect. My grandfather was 6 years older than my grandmother. He

was a shoemaker in Kamenets-Podolsk.

During the Great Patriotic War they lived in Saratov. Mendel and Basia-Yonta Weisman also resided in Ufa [about 1400 km from Moscow], Chernovtsy [about 1200 km from Moscow], Zastavna [about 1150 km from Moscow] and Kuibyshev, present Samara [over 800 km from Moscow] with their daughter Chava.

They moved to their children's families to help them with raising their grandchildren. My grandfather died in Kuibyshev in 1959 and my grandmother died in Chernovtsy in 1955.

They had eight children. One of them, born in 1916, died in infancy. Their children were raised in the religious environment and were taught to observe all Jewish traditions and rules. Their mother tongue was Yiddish.

All boys were circumcised and went to cheder. Girls also studied at cheder for girls. When they grew up and received secular education, and also, considering that they lived in the socialist countries, my mother's brothers and sisters, like the majority of Jews of their generation in the USSR gave up observing Jewish traditions. Their families did not celebrate Jewish holidays and none of them went to the synagogue.

My mother's sister Faina (her Jewish name was Feigele) Weisman was born. She married a Jewish man named Chaim Chait and moved to some place in Ukraine. She worked as an accountant, I don't know where.

My grandfather and grandmother lived with her. During the Great Patriotic War she evacuated to Saratov with her family and her parents. From there her husband went to the front when she was pregnant expecting their first son.

After the war her husband returned from the front and they moved to Chernovtsy in Western Ukraine [about 1200 km from Moscow]. I don't know for what reason they moved. Some time afterward Faina divorced her husband and went to work as an accountant in Zastavna village near Chernovtsy.

She moved to this village with her children and my maternal grandparents.

In 1987 she moved to America with her children.

Faina died in America in 1990.

My mother's sister Bella (nee Weisman), born in Saratov in 1918, finished an accounting school and married a Romanian Jewish man. I don't know his name.

In 1943 their son Michael was born. In 1950 their family moved to Chernovtsy. My maternal grandmother and grandfather moved with them. During the Great Patriotic War Bella was in Saratov. She worked as an accountant. Her son Michael is chief of construction trust in Saratov.

His wife Larisa is Russian. We do not have any contacts with them.

Bella died in Chernovtsy in 1983.

My mother's brother Arkadi (Jewish name Abram) Weisman, born in Saratov in 1919, finished a Construction College. During the Great Patriotic War he was an air force mechanic at the Leningrad

Front.

In 1947 he came to Saratov and in 1950 he moved to Chernovtsy with his family.