

Sarah Fichgendler



This is my mother, Sarah Fichgendler, nee Rosenthal. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1922.

My mother was born in 1887. When she was four, my grandfather died. My grandmother Ester raised her to be a future Jewish wife. My mother learned to cook and sew and knew Jewish traditions well. However, my mother was eager to study. She had a strong character and ran away from Telenesti at the age of 16. She went to study in the Jewish grammar school. After finishing it she got a certificate of a teacher. My mother moved to Tiflis, that's what Tbilisi was called at the time, to her brothers Max and Gedaliye. I don't remember under what circumstances they had left there. She worked as a teacher.

When she was in Tbilisi this was the period of genocide against the Armenian population in Turkey in 1915-1916. My mother told me that in Tbilisi a committee was organized to provide assistance to Armenians and she worked in this committee. She said when Armenians came to talk to her, they complained, 'You are a Georgian and you provide more help to Georgians,' and vice versa, when Georgians talked to her, they said, 'You help Armenians more than Georgians.' They never guessed that she was neither Georgian nor Armenian, but a Jew. My mother helped Georgians and Armenians equally.

In 1917 my grandmother fell ill in Telenesti. My brothers decided that one of them had to go there and of course, it was to be my mother. She went to her mother and stayed in Bessarabia. This was at the time when Bessarabia was annexed to Romania in 1918 and the border was closed. My mother moved to Kishinev and was a teacher of Hebrew in a lyceum for boys.