

Freida Minkovetskaya



This is my maternal grandmother Freida Minkovetskaya. This photo was taken for her passport in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1933.

I remember my mother's family well. My grandmother and grandfather were born in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. My grandfather Duvid-Ariye Minkovetskiy was born in 1868. Grandmother Freida, nee Mandel, was born in 1866. I didn't know any of my grandfather's relatives, but my grandmother had a sister living in Ataki village on the opposite bank of the river.

My mother's family was miserably poor before the revolution. My grandmother and grandfather rented apartments moving from one place to another. My grandmother was a housewife, and grandfather was the breadwinner for the family. Before the revolution my grandfather dealt in farming. He rented a plot of land from a landlord to farm it. He gave half of his crops to the landlord and had another half at his disposal. After the revolution my grandfather went to work as an acquisition clerk in the supply office that made stocks of fruit and vegetables for Leningrad and Leningrad region. When I was small I liked visiting him at work where I was always given some fruit. My grandmother was short and plump. She wore long black skirts and dark long-sleeved blouses. The only difference between her summer and winter clothes was the fabric, but not the design. My grandmother did not wear a wig, but she always covered her head with a dark kerchief. This was the traditional way the women of her time dressed.

My grandmother and grandfather had many children, but most of them died in their infancy. Only three of them survived: mama's older sister Rachil, born in the late 1890s, my mama Paya, born in 1903, and their younger brother Faivish, born in 1907. They spoke Yiddish at home, but also knew

Ukrainian and Russian. My mother's family was religious. All children were raised religious.

My grandmother lived a long life and died at the age of 95 in 1961. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery beside my grandfather's grave according to all Jewish rules. When grandmother was with us, we celebrated Sabbath at home. On Friday evening she lit candles. Grandmother had to prepare for the holiday. We didn't have candle stands and it was difficult to buy candles. We used makeshift means: I removed the inside of a potato, we poured oil inside and placed a little wick in it and we got a candle. When grandmother lit candles and covered her face with her hands when praying she started crying thinking about deceased Faivish, grandfather, Rachil and her husband. Then we sat down to dinner. On Saturday my parents had to go to work, but my grandmother did no work at home. She read the prayer book.