

Rosa Levina And Abram Levin



These are my parents: my father Abram Levin and my mother Rosa Levina, née Shatovskaya, after their wedding. This photo was taken in Novovorontsovka, Kherson province, in 1909.

My mother's family lived in Novovorontsovka. My grandmother and grandfather were about the same age. They had six daughters and three sons. My mother Rosa was born in 1885. Her Jewish name was Reizl. I don't know how religious my mother's family was. At my time, my mother's sisters or brothers were not religious and did not observe any Jewish traditions.

My father Abram was born in 1883. One or two years later my father's brother David was born. My father never told me about his childhood. All I know is that my father and his brother studied in cheder in a neighboring village and this was all education they got. They became workers.

After finishing elementary school my mother went to study at the Russian grammar school for girls in Kherson. Although it was difficult for Jews to enter a grammar school in tsarist Russia, there were exceptions made for advanced pupils and if they were successful they were even exempt from payment of the fee. My mother finished nine years in the grammar school. Graduates were allowed to work as teachers in an elementary school. My mother returned to Novovorontsovka and became a teacher in a local elementary school.

I don't know how she met my father. They got married in 1908 and lived in Novovorontsovka. I don't know whether they had a traditional Jewish wedding. After my paternal grandfather Isif passed away my grandmother Hana came to live with my parents and lived with us for the rest of her life. My father worked in the village of Babino, some 10 kilometers from Novovorontsovka. He was a worker at a dock. My mother worked as a teacher.

My parents didn't wear anything specifically Jewish. They wore common clothes like all other residents of the village. My mother wore dark dresses or a white blouse and a black skirt – his was

how she thought a teacher should look like. My mother wore her thick, dark hair in a knot.