

Rosa Gershenovich's Mother Elizaveta Veltman



My mother, Elizaveta Veltman [nee Green] in a photo taken in Odessa in 1912. My mother, Elizaveta Veltman [nee Green], was born in 1879 in the town of Okny near Bershad. We called her by her Jewish name, Leya, in the family. Her father, Avrum-Yankel Green, born in the 1860s, had a beautiful voice and was a cantor. He got invitations from synagogues in different towns and was very popular wherever he sang. I don't know what kind of elementary education was given to girls in the Green family, but my mother and her sister were well-educated women. They could read and write in Russian and Yiddish. Yiddish was spoken in the family. My mother told me a little about her childhood. As my grandfather was a cantor, they often moved from one place to another. My

mother saw many Jewish towns within the Jewish Pale of Settlement. My mother was a very beautiful woman. They say about women like her that their eyes have absorbed all the sorrows of the Jewish people. She had huge hazel eyes and thick black hair. My mother and father met in Odessa. My father's sister Dvoira studied in Odessa. My mother was her friend. Dvoira introduced her to her brother Moisey when he came to visit his sister before going to serve in the army. They fell in love with each other, although my mother was few years older than my father. While my father was in the army matchmakers came to his father many times offering rich fiancées for my father. My grandfather always answered that Moisey loved Leya and that was it. They had a traditional Jewish wedding in Bershad in 1912. There was a chuppah, a rabbi and klezmer musicians at the wedding. The party lasted for 3 days. My father wasn't religious any more, but he paid honors to his parents and the parents of his fiancée. My father believed that Jews had to struggle for a new life and to get education. He thought that religion was for backward, ignorant people. After their wedding my parents moved to Odessa. My father worked as a painter there, but he didn't work in that job for long. He was kept busy with revolutionary activities. He involved mother in party activities as well.