

Simon Grinshpoon's Parents Leiba And Gersh Grinshpoon



My parents, Leiba and Gersh Grinshpoon, photographed in Kiev around 1937 when they were visiting their daughter. My mother was always kind of a leader in our family. She decided that instead of doing random work my father should start his own business. My parents decided to grow wine. In 1923 he took a loan from the Agricultural Bank, and in association with another farmer he bought a small plot of land. Wine wasn't grown in Ukraine at that time and they had to order it from France. In the summer of 1924 my father planted the vines. Vines yield grapes after four year. To make a living my father decided to start making wine. He borrowed money from widow Milshtein, who had three daughters and loaned money for her daughters' dowry at 3% per month. My father bought grapes and made very good wine. He learned how to make wine barrels and even sold them. My father didn't sell wine before Christmas when it became more expensive because of the season. He managed to pay back his debts and bought grapes again and again until the time had come to harvest his own grapes. However, there was a terrible rainstorm in the first year that destroyed our harvest. My mother cried, but my father felt very optimistic. He bought grapes again and made wine. The following year we had plenty of grapes and my father made his own wine. But then collectivization began, and my father had to join the collective farm. He was reluctant to give away everything that he had worked for so hard. He joined the Jewish wine making collective farm. [Jewish collective farms were formed for the Jewish population living in rural areas in the course of collectivization in Ukraine.] There were three collective farms in Yaruga: one Jewish and two Ukrainian. My father never regretted joining this collective farm. He was paid well for his work, and the people were hard-working and wealthy. My father was involved in wine-growing in the beginning, but later he switched to a more familiar activity and became a miller. In 1937 I went to Leningrad and entered a military college there. I didn't tell my parents that I was going to Leningrad. When I told them that I had entered the college they got very upset, but they understood that I was old enough to make my own decisions. I finished a two-year advanced

course in 1939. I got a job assignment in Field Engineer Battalion 239 in Chernigov.