

Motel Trachtenbroit



This is a picture of my grandmother Motel Trachtenbroit, nee Broonshtein, my father's mother. The photo was taken in Briceni in 1935. My grandmother was born in Mogilyov-Podolsk, Vinnitsa region, in the 1860s. I don't know how my grandparents met. They had seven children: four sons and three daughters. My father told me little about his childhood. His father owned a small stationery store. My grandmother was a housewife. My grandfather's store provided enough income for them to make their living and afford education for their children. My grandparents' family was religious. I don't know whether my grandfather prayed at home since we didn't live with them, but on Saturdays and Jewish holidays my grandparents went to the synagogue. They celebrated Sabbath and Jewish holidays and followed the kashrut. I loved my grandparents on my father's side dearly. My grandfather Pinkhas was a short, slim man. He wore elegant suits, light shirts and ties. He wore

a hat to go out. He worked at the store and I didn't see much of him. Grandmother Motel often came to see us. On Friday mornings she made challah and she always brought me one. I always looked forward to seeing my grandmother and ran to her to hug her as soon as I heard our housemaid opening the door. My grandmother loved my mother and me. She cared about my mother as much as she would have about her own daughter. My mother often had angina and Grandmother Motel stayed with us through the period of my mother's illness. She looked after my mother until she got well and slept on the sofa beside my mother's bed. In the middle of July 1941 the Romanian commandment ordered all Jews to come to the main square. My parents and I, my grandparents, my aunt Adel and her son Yuzik and my mother's brother Joseph, his wife and two daughters went there. All Jews were ordered to go in the direction of Sekiryany [50 km from Briceni]. My grandparents could hardly walk. It was hot and we were desperate of exhaustion and fear. In Sekiryany we were ordered to stay in abandoned houses. We stayed there for a while. My mother gave away her jewelry in exchange for food. Later we continued on our way until we reached Transnistria, across the Dneestr River. My grandmother Motel died near the village of Vendichany. My father and two local villagers buried her on the roadside near Vendichany. My father made a note for himself about the place where my grandmother was buried, but when we went to Vendichany after the war the village was destroyed so much that it was impossible to find her grave.