

Zinaida Leibovich's Grandmother Haya-Surah Altman



This is a studio portrait of Haya-Surah Altman, my mother's mother. The photograph was taken in Kamenets-Podolsk in 1916. She and my grandfather lived in Kamenets-Podolski all their lives. They had a house of their own, a small wooden house with all conveniences outside. The house had four rooms and a veranda. There also was a Russian oven that served for both cooking and heating. They had an orchard and a vegetable garden and they kept chicken, ducks, geese, goats and a

cow. My mother told me that when it got cold in winter they brought their goats into the house. They always had enough milk. My grandmother made sour cream and baked milk in her oven and sold these at the market. She also sold eggs. My mother told me that they always had enough food, although my grandmother and my mother had to work hard for it. My grandparents were very religious. They celebrated all the Jewish holidays and attend ed synagogue. On Friday my grandmother always lit a candle, and on Saturday her Ukrainian neighbor came to help around the house and take care of the poultry yard and cattle. My grandmother always made matzo at Pesach and even sold some to her Jewish neighbors. At home my grandmother and grandfather spoke Yiddish, and my mother knew Yiddish very well, too.