

Faina Minkova's Grandparents Khonia And Masha Shyfrinson



My grandfather on my mother's side, Khonia Shyfrinson, and my grandmother Masha Shyfrinson. The photo was taken in Korkino village, Cheliabinsk region in 1947 at my mother's request. She was leaving Korkino for Chernovtsy and wanted to take her parents' picture with her. My mother's parents came from Orsha. My grandfather, Khonia Shyfrinson, was born in Orsha in the 1870s, and my grandmother, Masha Shyfrinson, was born in Orsha in 1881. She came from a very educated and wealthy family. When she was a child her mother, my great-grandmother, had a love affair and ran away with this man to England. My great-grandfather married a childless woman to raise my grandmother. His second wife's name was Leya. My grandmother was the only child in the family, and her stepmother gave her all her love. My grandmother was a pretty and spoiled girl. The family had a housemaid and my grandmother didn't do any housework. She had classes with a teacher at home. She studied foreign languages, took piano lessons and liked to read. I don't think that my grandmother's family was religious. I don't know how my grandfather met my grandmother. They got married when she was a young girl. My grandfather sold fruit. He was a wholesale dealer. He had fruit delivered from Pridnestroviye and Odessa region to sell it to locals at wholesale prices. My grandfather wasn't rich, but provided well for his family. They had a big two-storied stone house, with a high porch and columns, in the main street in Orsha. They rented out the first floor, and lived on the second floor. My grandfather and grandmother had six daughters. My grandfather wanted a son, but they never had any boys. Their oldest daughter, Raya, was born in 1904. Then came Tzyva, born in 1906, Rosa, born in 1908, and Slava, born in 1912. My mother, Tzyva, was born in 1916, and her younger sister, Hava, in 1918. My grandmother didn't work, but she wasn't very fond of housekeeping or bringing up her daughters either. Although she had a housemaid to help her about the house, she still found it hard to find time to raise her six daughters, and read, which was her favorite pastime. When she got married her stepmother Leya moved in with her family. Leya did all the housework and gave all her love and care to my grandmother's daughters. They were a very caring family. My grandfather was everyone's darling. Of course, my

grandmother's daughters loved my grandmother, but they were still closer to my grandfather. My grandfather was very religious. He went to the synagogue every day. My grandmother didn't join him, not even on Saturdays. They followed the kashrut. My great-grandmother did all the cooking. She cooked traditional Jewish food: chicken broth with dumplings, boiled chicken, gefilte fish and a lot of vegetables. My mother told me that she taught them how to cook. My mother learned how to make all traditional food from my great-grandmother Leya. After the Revolution of 1917 my grandfather began to have problems. The Soviet authorities weren't pleased with his commercial activities. He was declared a profiteer, who was making money in dishonest manner. My grandfather didn't stop his business, but he had to do it secretly. Private business wasn't allowed, but he had to continue working to be able to feed the family.