

Pesia Ostrovskaya With Her Children



This is a picture of my grandmother Pesia Ostrovskaya, nee Fridkina, and her children. The photo was taken when the family moved to Chernigov in 1919 after my grandfather passed away. My cousin, the one wearing a white shirt, is on the right. I don't remember his name. The one in the back, wearing a white over-shirt is Lyova Ostrovski, my mother Revekka Ostrovskaya is on the right, Naum Ostrovski in the dark shirt is on my grandmother's left and the youngest child, Genia Ostrovskaya, is in the front. Before the Revolution of 1917 my mother's family lived in the small village of Kalygarka in Kiev region. My grandfather was a forest warden. My grandmother came from a wealthy merchant's family. She could read and write in Yiddish, knew prayers by heart and was good at housekeeping. Their peaceful life ended in 1917 when the Revolution took place and was followed by the Civil War. Gangs attacked their neighborhood and carried out pogroms. My grandfather's family found shelter in Ukrainian families. My grandfather's house was robbed. The bandits broke their beautiful kosher crockery and took away the silver tableware. This disaster was a hard blow to my grandfather. He fell very ill and died in 1919 from a broken heart, as they called it in his time, or, from infarction to use a more modern language. My grandmother sold what was left and moved to Chernigov with her four children. She bought a small house. My grandparent's children grew up to become atheists, even though they studied with a melamed and finished Jewish elementary school when they were young. My mother, the oldest, was born in 1906. After her came Naum, who was two or three years younger. Naum finished Agricultural College and lived his life in Chernigov. He worked for a grain supply company. Naum wasn't liable for military service due to his poor sight. He had a 'white card' [a release from the army]. He was in evacuation with his wife Sima and his daughters Alla and Anna. Naum died in Chernigov in the middle of the 1970s. He was buried in the town cemetery. His daughters and their families moved to Israel in the 1970s. Alla passed away in 2000. Anna and her family live in Haifa. My mother's next brother, Lyova, was born in 1914. He was a student in a college in Leningrad when the Great Patriotic War began. He joined the Territorial Army and perished in the first days of the defense of Leningrad. My mother's youngest sister, Genia, was born in 1918. She married a Russian man. My grandmother respected her daughter's feelings and didn't have any objections to this marriage. However, Genia didn't

change her last name. To keep the memory of her father she remained Ostrovskaya for the rest of her life. Her husband, Dmitri Nutnikov, perished at the front. Genia, who had a daughter called Svetlana, never remarried. Her daughter died in the early 1990s and Genia and her grandson moved to Israel. They couldn't live together, so Genia, who had her leg amputated, spends the rest of her days in an old people's home. My mother finished a Jewish elementary school. She could read and write in Russian and Ukrainian, but her mother tongue was Yiddish. She went to work at the stocking factory in 1918. There were many young employees, and work at the factory changed her life. She had her hair cut and joined the group of young people that was fond of revolutionary ideas and the urge to build a new socialist society.