

Frieda Portnaya's Mother Tsylia Mandemberg



This is my mother Tsylia Yakovlevna Mandemberg. The photo taken in Makarov, near Kiev, in 1915, when mother was 18 years old. My grandmother Frieda was my grandfather's second wife. My mother was their first child. She was born in Makarov in 1897. She had a two brothers, Lyova and Iosif, and a sister, Fiera. Fiera died before the [1917] Revolution. Lyova was born in 1899, and Iosif was born in 1900. My grandfather, who was a rabbi, had four children from his first wife. My grandparents were well-to-do. They had a private house in Makarov; it was a good house, built of stone with two floors and eight or nine rooms -- very appropriate for a rabbi. It was surrounded by a garden and fruit trees. My mother told me a story. She loved to sew and wanted to learn this profession. There was a tailor in Makarov and my grandfather arranged for my mother to take lessons from him. Once my grandfather was passing by this tailor's house and saw my mother babysitting his child. My grandfather got angry at this - he was paying the tailor to teach my mother. He told the tailor that Mandemberg's daughter could not be a baby sitter for an ordinary

tailor's child. He took my mother home and bought her a sewing machine. He told her to sit down and sew and do whatever she wanted, but she wouldn't study any more. And she learned to sew. My mother went to the Jewish school in Makarov. She read and wrote well in Yiddish. After my grandparents died, my mother and her brothers sold the house in Makarov and moved to Kiev. Those were very difficult years. My mother worked very hard. She traveled around the villages and sewed in exchange for food and food products. She was actually a provider for her brothers. She married my father, Anatoliy Mikhailovich Waldman, in 1921.