

Galina Shkolnikova's Grandparents, Mordekhay And Doba Farber, And Their Daughter Rakhil Farber



This is Mordekhay Farber, my paternal grandfather, his wife Doba Yuliyevna Farber [nee Moina] and their younger daughter Rakhil. My grandfather worked in Nikopol, Southern Ukraine, as a log storage manager and had a house with a big garden on the bank of the Dnepr river. During the NEP he organized a swimming pool and a boat-house in the garden, where his younger sons Isaac and Abram worked as boatmen. My grandmother and her daughters were keen on sewing and clothes-designing, besides keeping the household. They liked to wear beautiful and fashionable clothes.

Aunt Rakhil and her daughter Eleonora still preserve this passion. My grandparents' mother tongue was Yiddish, but they spoke Russian in the family. They switched to Yiddish when they wanted to conceal something from the children or the maids. The boys studied Hebrew, probably in cheder. I don't know if the girls studied Hebrew. They all - grandfather, grandmother and their children - spoke very good Ukrainian. My grandparents were religious people. All Jewish traditions were observed and all holidays were celebrated in the family. They attended the synagogue.

Grandfather Mordekhay solemnly trampled on the New Testament on Sabbath, which was specially kept at home for that purpose, showing his belonging to Judaism and his denial of Russian Orthodoxy. My grandfather died in Nikopol in 1931, and, obviously, as a pious man, was buried according to the Jewish tradition. After his death my grandmother moved to her older daughter Sarah and helped her to raise her little son, who was born in 1931. In 1934 a tragedy happened. The boy went for a walk with his grandmother, was hit by a car and killed. After that my grandmother moved to her son, my father Idel, who lived in Leningrad. She lived with our family and died in besieged Leningrad at the end of 1941. She didn't keep the Jewish tradition alive after she moved in with her children, because they were atheists. She was buried in the Volkov cemetery, but her grave doesn't exist any more because a bomb hit the place.