

Chaya Glezer



This is my mother Chaya Rapeik, This photo was taken in Birzai in 1919, before she got married. I didn't know my maternal relatives. My mother was orphaned, when she was a young girl. Her parents died before she turned 18. The only thing I know is my grandfather's name. His name was Khona Rapeik. This beautiful and rare name was my mother's maiden name. Unfortunately, I can't remember my grandmother's first name, though my mother must have told me her name, when I was a child, I would think. My mother's only sister, Feiga Rapeik, died in her childhood. However, my mother had a cousin. His name was Shimon. He was a vendor and a rather wealthy man, though he didn't provide any support for my mother and was just a relative in name. Unfortunately, this is all I know about my mother's family. My mother was born in Birzai in 1896. When my mother became an orphan, she moved to a Latvian town, I don't quite remember, which town it was, but there was a distant relative of hers living there. In this town my mother became a dressmaker's apprentice. She went to work for a dressmaker where she was provided with boarding and meals. It didn't take long before my mother acquired the necessary trimming skills. Her mistress was good to the orphaned Jewish girl. My mother remembered the kindness of this lady, who was so helpful

at the very start of my mother's adult life. Having learned a new craft, my mother returned to her hometown. She settled in her parents' house. Chaya earned her living by sewing.