

Evgeni Chazov's Grandmother Zlata Bragher And Grandfather Moisey Bragher



My maternal grandmother and grandfather Zlata Bragher and Moisey Bragher photographed on the day of their wedding in Krivoy Rog in 1905. Podgaevski photo studio.

I was born in and raised by a mixed family; my mother was Jewish and my father was Russian. My mother's parents came from Krivoy Rog located in the southeast of Ukraine, 350 km from Kiev It was the center of coal and iron industry. My mother's father Moisey Bragher was born in the 1880s, was a tinsmith. My grandfather Moisey worked very hard before the revolution of 1917 and then continued working at a state owned mine. Moisey was a highly skilled tinsmith. He never refused

his Jewish or non-Jewish neighbors when they asked him to help and very often he did hard work for free. People liked my grandfather and brought him milk, eggs or bread - whatever they could afford to pay him for work. My grandmother Zlata, whose maiden name I don't remember, was almost the same age as my grandfather. I don't have any information about her family, but from what my mother's cousin sister Bertha Gribovskaya told me my grandmother received common Jewish education at home. She could read prayers in Hebrew and she was a terrific cook like all Jewish housewives. She could also make clothes. She had her customers that paid for her work, but sometimes she made clothes for her relatives or neighbors for free. She was known and respected in her neighborhood.

My grandfather and grandmother got married in 1905. They had a Jewish wedding with a chuppah, signing the ketubbah, numerous guests and Jewish music. My grandmother had a fancy wedding dress on. One can tell that her parents were far from poor. My grandfather and grandmother lived in Krivoy Rog one or two years. Their first baby, my mother's older brother, whose name I don't know, died in infancy. After he died my grandmother and grandfather moved to Novovorontsovka, Kherson province [150 km from Krivoy Rog and 500 km from Kiev] probably looking for a job there.

My mother Friena Bragher was born in Novovorontsovka in 1908. My mother happened to be the only child in the family. In 1911 the family moved back to Krivoy Rog. I don't know why they returned, probably, things were not going very well. They settled down with Golda Gribovskaya' [the grandmother's sister] family in her house. The families had separate entranceways to their apartments. My aunt Bertha told me that both families observed Jewish traditions, followed kashrut and celebrated Sabbath. On Saturdays Golda's husband and grandfather Moisey didn't go to work. On Friday both families lit candles and sat down to the table set for a celebration. I don't know any details about their celebration of holidays, but I know from aunt Bertha that there was always matzah in the house at Pesach and grandfather Moisey, being the oldest in the family, conducted seder. On Saturdays and holidays they went to the synagogue in the center of the town. Krivoy Rog was an industrial town and there were many Jews residing in it like anywhere else in the south of Russia. [Ukraine] I don't know the exact numbers, but the Jewish population constituted at least 25%. Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish families were good neighbors and respected each other.