

Anna Gliena's Grandmother Hana Gliena



This is my paternal grandmother Khana Gliena. This photo was taken some time before 1931 in Warsaw, and sent to us in Kharkov in 1931. I've never seen my grandmother and this photograph helps me to know what she looked like.

My father Samuel Gliena came from a small town near Warsaw. I don't remember its name. I have never heard of a Jewish family from a small town near Warsaw with such strange family name. It doesn't sound Jewish or Polish. My father's family was very poor. There were poor Jews living in this small town. My father's father Froim Gliena was born in 1860s. He was a shoemaker, but he could hardly earn enough to support his family. There were more shoemakers than residents that could afford to buy an extra pair of shoes. My grandfather was very religious. His life consisted of prayers and work. He believed that his being a righteous man would one day bring wealth into his family, but there was only poverty awaiting for them. My grandmother Khana was born in 1865. She was a plain religious woman with no education. She had to go to work for a Polish landlord for additional earnings to make ends meet. She often got payment in food products rather than money.

They spoke Yiddish in the family. My grandfather studied in cheder and could write in Yiddish, but I don't think he could read anything, but his book of prayers. My grandmother had no education whatsoever, and the letters that we received from her in 1930s were written by somebody else. Grandmother was very old. My father left his home when he was young. My grandfather and grandmother died tragically. In 1939, when Germans came to Poland, they set my grandparents' home on fire and my grandparents perished. We got to know about this after World War II. I don't know what happened to my father's sisters and brothers: there were at least 12 of them. My father told me their names, but I don't remember.