

Frida Palanker's Parents Polina And Nusim Veprinsky, And Mother's Cousin With Her Husband



From left to right: my mother, my father, my mother's cousin and her husband.

My father Nusim (Naum) Veprinsky was born in Korostyshev, Zhytomir region, in 1895. My mother Polina Veprinskaya, nee Shapiro, was born in Odessa in 1899.

My parents got married in 1917. I don't know how they met. My mother told me once that it was love from the first sight. Both of them came from poor families and their wedding party was very modest. But it was still a real Jewish wedding with the huppah and all wedding rituals. My parents got an apartment in Bolshaya Podvalnaya street in the center of Kiev. Our apartment was in the wing of a big 4-storied brick building. There were two rooms, a kitchen, a toilet and a hallway in this apartment. There was no bathroom and we washed ourselves in the kitchen. There was no running water in the house. We had a pump in the yard and brought water from there in buckets.

My father was a tailor and my mother was a housewife. She also learned to sew before she got married. She was an apprentice of a tailor and her specialty was making skirts. She didn't work after she got married, because it was traditional for a Jewish woman to be a housewife. Although the family wasn't wealthy my mother only made skirts for herself and her daughters.

At Sabbath my mother lit candles and cooked delicious dinner. My father worked on Saturday, as Saturday was a workday. They celebrated Jewish holidays. I remember Papa putting Hanukkeh geld (small change) under his children's pillows. At Pesach my parents used to buy matsa at the synagogue. My mother crushed it in the mortar and then sifted the flour to make sponge cakes. Mama cooked stuffed fish and made chicken neck with liver and fried flour and boiled chicken. We didn't have bread in the house at Pesach. My mother had Pesach dishes that were used only on this holiday. It was set of dishes for dinner, casseroles and frying pans.