

Tsyliya Spivak's Aunt Sima Shpektorova



My mother's younger sister Sima photographed for the memory in 1931.

My mother came from a big Jewish family living in Sednevo town in Chernigov province, 200 km from Kiev. I've never been to Sednevo, but my mother told me that it was like any other small Jewish town. There was a synagogue in the town. Jews commonly dealt in crafts and trade. My mother's father Borukh Kaplan, my grandfather, was a tradesman. My grandmother Tsyvah, who was 12 years younger than my grandfather, was a housewife and looked after the children. Sometimes she helped my grandfather in the store in the house where the family lived. They didn't have any other employees working for them in the store. They were selling haberdashery and household goods in their little store and Ukrainian customers of my grandfather from surrounding villages often came by my grandfather's store to buy what they needed. My grandfather got along well with Ukrainians. In 1919 his big family moved to Chernigov [regional center in the north of Ukraine, 220 km from Kiev] after selling their remaining belongings. In Chernigov my grandfather bought a small two-bedroom apartment in a private house where they lived until before the Great Patriotic War. My grandmother and grandfather were very religious people. They ate kosher food and celebrated Sabbath. The whole family got together on big religious Jewish holidays. There were 12 children born to the family, but before the Great Patriotic War there were seven of them left. The rest of the children died in infancy.

My mother's youngest sister Sima was born in 1917 when my grandmother was way in her forties. Sima loved my mother dearly and even sat on her lap during my mother's wedding. Sima finished a 7-year school. She married Boris Shpektorov, a Jewish guy, and they had two daughters: Larisa and Irina. Boris perished at the front. Sima didn't remarry. She died in 1998. Her older daughter Larisa

finished a technical school and worked as an accountant. Larisa was married to Gennadiy Klyuchnikov, a Russian man. Her husband has passed away and her two sons moved elsewhere. Yevgeniy lives in Germany and Igor lives somewhere in Donetsk region. Larisa is alone in Chernigov. Zelda was raising her sister Irina. Irina and Fania finished a college in the Far East. Irina, her husband Yuri Sarayev he is Russian and their children Zoya and Boris live in Arsenyev town in Primorskiy region, Russia.