

Freida Usatinskaya With Her Mother And Sister



This is a picture of my grandmother Esther Pivchik, standing, my mother Freida Usatinskaya (nee Pivchick), sitting on the left, and her younger sister Sarra Foltysanskaya (nee Pivchik). The photo was taken on my mother's birthday in Gaisin in 1908.

I know very little about my mother's parents. They lived in Gaisin, Vinnitsa region. My mother's father, Srul Pivchik, was born in the 1860s and was either a shochet or a senior man at the synagogue in Gaisin. The family was poor. I only have one photograph of my grandmother Esther. She was younger than my grandfather. She was born in the 1870s and was a housewife. I also know that my grandfather and grandmother died long before my parents met in the 1910s.

My mother was born in Gaisin in 1896. She finished a Jewish elementary school and then studied at the lower secondary school in Gaisin. She didn't finish it. I think she had to go to work to earn her living. I don't know what she did for a living. My mother could read and write in Yiddish and Russian very well. Regretfully, that's all I know about the life of my mother before she met my father. I know that her parents were very religious and that she was raised that way, too. She observed Jewish traditions, celebrated holidays and prayed. My mother must have been very poor and must have had a hard life if she agreed to marry a widower with two children. This means that she had no choice. Perhaps, she never talked about her youth for that reason.

My mother had two sisters and a brother. They got secondary education. They left their parents' home as soon as they grew up. They were all religious people and observed Jewish laws and traditions throughout their life. My mother's oldest sister, born in 1890, moved to Palestine with her husband. I don't know her name or the names of her three daughters, who were born in the Promised Land.

Aunt Sarra Foltysanskaya, my mother's younger sister, was born in 1895. Her family lived in Beltsy, Moldova. Her husband was a craftsman and they had four sons and a daughter. I don't remember the name of her oldest son, but the others were called Srul, Izia, Natan and Esfir. They were in evacuation with the family of Uncle Gedali, and after the war they settled down in Chernovtsy. We never met them. Aunt Sarra died a long time ago. She died even before Uncle Gedali passed away.