

Freida Usatinskaya With Her Friends



This is a picture of my mother Freida Usatinskaya (nee Pivchik) on the right and one of her friends in Gaisin in 1914. This photo was taken to be sent to my mother's sister Sarra Foltysanskaya (nee Pivchik) and her husband Vladimir in Zguritsa where they lived at the time.

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.