

Efim Zhornitskiy's Mother Sosia Zhornitskiy's Family



This is the family of my mother Sosia Zhornitskiy. Standing from left to right: my mother's sisters Rachel, Zlota, Molka and my mother's brother Volka Portnoy. Sitting from left to right: my mother Sosia, my great grandmother Slava Shneiderman, my mother's sister Myndia, my grandmother Etl Portnaya, my grandfather Leib Portnoy and my mother's brothers Haim and Berl Portnoy. The photo was taken in Tulchin in 1914.

My grandfather on my mother's side Leib Portnoy was born in Tulchin in 1856. He owned a grocery store. He also bought up the bristle in the surrounding villages and supplied with it a number of factories. He was a successful businessman, nevertheless they didn't have any housemaids: my grandmother and her daughters managed with all housekeeping chores. My grandfather was a giber (strong man, hero in Yiddish). Once he was involved in fighting a fire at the cigarette factory in Uman. He climbed onto burning roof to remove sheets of iron from it when he caught fire himself. He jumped into a lake with ice cold water and caught cold. He was paralyzed and was confined to bed for a few years before he could walk again. But he couldn't walk properly, he was lame and people gave him the nickname of Leib der krimer (Leib the Lame in Yiddish).

On Saturday and on holidays my grandfather went to synagogue where he had his own seat . My mother told me that my grandfather was a severe man and could not stand any objections. He was strict with the children and punished them often. He didn't want his daughters to study. He used to say that it was sufficient for a woman to be able to count the items that she was giving to a laundress. The girls grew up to be wonderful housewives and cooks. His younger daughters studied in grammar school. Times were changing and my grandfather had to give up his outdated views. In 1920 grandfather Leib fell ill with diphtheria, but nobody could diagnose this illness in Tulchin. My grandmother took him to a professor in Odessa, but it was too late. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Odessa. This cemetery was later removed, but my grandfather's photograph is on the gravestone of his son Volodia in another Jewish cemetery in Odessa.

My grandmother on my mother's side Etl Portnaya, nee Shneiderman was born in Tulchin in 1862. She was a tall thin woman. She was very religious. Before the revolution of 1917 my grandmother

wore a wig. When I was 9-10 years old my grandmother often visited us. She asked us to turn off the radio and asked if we had a minute. She told us stories about Jews and Biblical stories. When her daughters got married she lived alone in her house. Her daughters visited her every day or several times during a day. My grandmother Etl followed the kashrut and celebrated Shabbat till her last day. I asked my Russian friends to come start a fire in her stove on Saturday, because she didn't allow us to do it. My grandmother used the hallway during Succoth. . We removed the tiled roof over the hallway before the holiday to make an impression of a succah and grandmother celebrated the holiday in her succah. In the summer of 1941 when the war broke out (for the USSR) grandmother Etl couldn't walk and it was impossible to take her to evacuation. My father's sister Khona agreed to look after her. The Germans ordered all the Jews to walk to a camp and as my grandmother couldn't walk they shot her at the entrance of her house. There was nobody to bury her and she didn't have a grave.