

Efim Zhornitskiy's uncle Berl Portnoy And His Wife Feiga Portnaya



My mother's brother Berl Portnoy and his wife Feiga. This photo was made in Tulchin in 1914 after their wedding.

My mother's older brother Berl was born in 1888. He was tall and handsome. He finished a commercial school. In the 1910s Berl, my grandmother's sister Soibl and her husband Shmil Shiser moved to America. The Shisers stayed overseas. Before the war we received letters and parcels from them, but after the war we lost track of them. Berl returned home. He brought young apple and pear plants that we planted in my grandmother's orchard. I don't know what kind they were, but they were the most delicious fruit I ever tried. My grandmother didn't have a single tooth, but she could eat these pears, they were so juicy. Berl was an intelligent and respectable man. He helped my grandfather Leib with the accounting. He married Feiga Rubin, a girl from an respectable family in Tulchin. She finished grammar school. Their daughter Raya was born in 1917. Berl was killed by a stray shell during the civil war. There was a woman in labor in the neighboring house and Berl came out of his shelter to help her. Feiga and her daughter Raya didn't keep in touch with us. They thought we were kaptsan (beggar in Yiddish). Only when my brother and I became students a few years before the war did they begin to visit us. In the summer of 1941, on the way to evacuation Raya started to give birth and they had to get off the train on a station and they were killed by the Germans there.