

Bella Kisselgof , Her Grandfather Shymon Rivkin, grandmother Riva Rivkina And Cousin Yura



My grandfather Shymon Rivkin and my grandmother Riva Rivkina with their grandchildren, in a photo taken in Enakievo in 1938. That's me, Bella Kisselgof, sitting in my grandfather's lap. My grandmother is holding my cousin Yura, the son of Misha, my mother's brother. My grandparents' visits were a holiday for me. Sometimes they brought my cousin Yura with them. We were the same age and played together. We spoke Russian in the house. During my grandparents' visits the adults communicated in Yiddish and spoke Russian to the children. My grandfather Shymon Rivkin was born in 1870. I know little about his family. After my grandfather had his bar mitzvah, his father offered him a choice of three professions - shoemaker, tailor or blacksmith. My grandfather

chose the profession of blacksmith. He was an apprentice at first, and then an assistant until he became a very good blacksmith. When he started earning enough money to provide for the family he married my grandmother Riva. After they got married my grandmother was a housewife. My grandparents were religious people. They led a traditional Jewish way of life. On Fridays they went to the synagogue and my grandmother lit candles at home. They celebrated Jewish holidays in the family. I remember my grandfather praying when he was visiting us in Enakievo. I had to leave the room, but I could look through the doorway to see how he put on his thales and tefillin to say his prayers.