

Faina Minkova's Mother Tzyva Shyfrinson



My mother, Tzyva Shyfrinson, when she was 16 years old. The photo was taken for her passport in Orsha in 1932. My mother was born in 1916. My grandfather, Khonia Shyfrinson, wasn't rich, but provided well for his family. He was a wholesale dealer. He had fruit delivered from Pridnestroviye and Odessa region to sell it to locals at wholesale prices. They had a big two-storied stone house, with a high porch and columns, in the main street in Orsha. They rented out the first floor, and lived on the second floor. My grandfather and grandmother had six daughters. My mother's older sisters were raised religious. A teacher came to teach them Jewish traditions and how to read and write in Yiddish. The rest of the children were growing up after the Revolution of 1917 during the struggle against religion. My mother and her sisters Slava and Haya studied at a Russian secondary school. My great-grandmother taught them to write and read Yiddish. After the Revolution they spoke two languages in the family. The older daughters and their parents spoke Yiddish, and the younger daughters spoke Russian. They studied at a Russian school and it was easier for them to

communicate in Russian. My mother finished secondary school when she was 17 and went to study in Nizhniy Novgorod. Somehow she failed to continue her studies. She worked at a factory for some time and then moved to Moscow. She tried to enter an institute [college] in Moscow. She had a certificate confirming her work experience at the factory, but she was the daughter of a profiteer and was not admitted. My mother returned to Orsha.