

Semyon Sandler's Family



This is a picture of the family of my father Semyon Sandler. From left to right are my father's younger brother Peisah Sandler, my grandmother, his sister Elena Ivleva [nee Sandler] and my father. The photo was taken in Kopyl in the 1920s. My grandfather on my father's side, Avrom-Ber Sandler, was born in 1871. He was a carpenter. My grandmother was a housewife, which was a usual thing in Jewish families. I don't remember her name; she was just 'Granny' for me. I don't know what kind of family she came from. I only know that she came from Kopyl, too. There were many children in the family. They had two sons and a daughter besides my father. The oldest was Elena, born in 1894, then came Grigory in 1895, and my father, Semyon followed in 1897. Peisah, the last one, was born in 1899. The family wasn't wealthy. My grandmother could hardly get sufficient food and clothing for the family. Except for my grandfather, who was busy in his shop from morning till night, everybody else was helping my grandmother to grow vegetables in her vegetable garden. We mainly grew potatoes, and they saved the family from starving. My grandmother also had a few chickens and a goat. They lived in a small, miserable house. It had a thatched roof and the goat often jumped onto the roof to eat some of it. They lived a very modest life. My grandmother and grandfather didn't go to the synagogue very often. My father said they prayed at home. They celebrated Jewish holidays in the family, and that's probably all they did. They didn't follow the kashrut. Their children studied in cheder and finished lower secondary school in town. They spoke Yiddish. My father's brothers Grigory and Peisah moved to Minsk in the early 1930s. Both of them were apprentices to a carpenter at a plant. They married Jewish women. Grigory had two sons, and Peisah had a son and a daughter. Both brothers were on the front. Peisah's family was killed by the fascists in Kopyl on the first day of the war. He got married again after the war and had a son with his second wife. After the war the two brothers returned to Minsk and stayed there till the end of their lives. Grigory died in the late 1970s and Peisah died in 1984. My father's sister Elena married a Russian man. She took her husband's last name, Ivleva. He was a high official in the NKVD. They lived in Minsk. Elena used to visit us with her husband. They came by car, which was rare at that time. They had a son and a daughter. Elena was a housewife. In 1937 Elena's husband was arrested and shot [during the so-called Great Terror]. Fortunately nothing happened to Elena and her children. She attended an accounting course and worked as an accountant at a plant. After Stalin's death in the 1950s Elena's husband was rehabilitated. During the war Elena was in the ghetto in Minsk. She managed to escape from there and got into the

partisan unit where she stayed until the end of the war. After the war she lived in Minsk with her children. She died there in 1978.