

## Maria Koblik-Zeltser With Her Family



My grandmother Charna Kozhushnyan is sitting in the center, I am sitting next to her, my father Yankel Kozhushnyan, my mother Soibel Kozhushnyan and my brother Velvl are standing. The photograph was taken in 1935 in Rezina.

I didn't know my paternal grandfather. All I know is that his name was Leibl Kozhushnyan, and he was born in the 1840s in Bessarabia. I don't know exactly where he was born. The origin of my paternal grandfather's name is unknown. Such surnames don't indicate nationality, but rather craft or the place of origin. In Bessarabia there was the hamlet of Kozhushki, not far from Rezina. The roots of our family are probably from there. I know that Grandfather's first wife died at a young age, and Grandfather had a son from the first marriage, who lived in the town of Orhei. I have never seen him. I don't remember his name either. Grandfather Leibl got married for a second time. His wife was his age. She was born in Kishinev. My grandmother Charna was born in 1847. I don't remember her maiden name.

My father was born in 1880 in Rezina. Father got only elementary Jewish education at cheder, which was traditional for Jewish families. Nevertheless Father was good at writing in Russian and Romanian. He read a lot of Pushkin's works and cited them. Father was well up in book-keeping, trade and commerce. Father became a grown-up rather early. When Grandfather died, he became the head and the bread-winner of the family of three women: grandmother and his two younger sisters. Father began to work at a young age. He was an assistant to a salesman and gradually he became a salesman in a large store, owned by a wealthy Jew. Father was a very honest man and the owner of the store totally trusted him. Father learnt a lot from him and began making pretty good money.

Father was very popular with Rezina's potential brides as he was a modern, young, well-dressed man and a good dancer. When Father decided that it was time for him to get married, he was introduced to my mother by match-makers. Father came to meet my mother in the town of Soroca, where my mother lived. He enchanted her and all relatives and left... He came back in a year and without explaining anything proposed to my mother. It didn't take her long to say yes. Then Father

used to say that he fell in love with my mother at first sight, and it was unexpected to him, but he felt responsible for his younger siblings and left home to tackle things at home and earn some money for the wedding. He planned to come back to my mother.

I don't know whether Mother got some education. I think she finished a couple of classes in the lyceum. Mother was very literate: she could read and write in Russian and Romanian. She was an erudite. Besides, Mother was very strong-willed. She was actually the head of the family. She had the last word in decisions made by her siblings and later on my father didn't take any actions, even connected with his work, without having a word with my mother.