

Ilia Rozenfeld's Grandfather Shymon Rozenfeld



My paternal grandfather Shymon Rozenfeld, photographed in Poltava around 1912, on his birthday. My grandfather was a very handsome man with a big beard wearing a fancy suit. B. Friedenstal photo studio in Malo-Petrovskaya Street.

My grandfather Shymon was born in Kobelyaki in 1860. He finished cheder and an accounting course. He married a Jewish girl from his town, when he was rather young, but this was customary with Jewish families. My grandmother's name was Anna, but I don't know her maiden's name. In the early 1900s my grandfather and his family moved to Poltava where they settled down in the lower part of the town Podol a Jewish neighborhood. My grandfather's solid brick house is still there. My grandmother's distant relative Moldavskiy who owned a mill, employed my grandfather. The mill was located almost across the street from my grandfather's house. He worked there as assistant accountant till his old age. My grandmother Anna died in 1920. She had diabetes that became acute during the period of famine. My grandfather passed away in 1923. I was born before he died, but I cannot remember him, of course.

Shymon and Anna had 12 children, but only nine of them lived. I remember my aunt and uncles' names as they were called at home. Perhaps, they had different names written in their birth certificates or passports: Rosa, born in 1880, Vera, born in 1882, Manya, born in 1885, uncle Emmanuel [called Monia at home], born in 1890, Lubov, born in 1892, Rachil, born in 1894, Fania, born in 1896, and Bertha, born in 1902. My father Alexandr was the forth child. He was born in

1888. The older children were born in Kobelyaki and later the family moved to Poltava.

My grandfather's family had a rather modest life. My grandmother was a housewife. She had a housemaid to help her with the children and about the house. There was a vegetable garden near the house. My grandparents kept livestock: poultry and a cow. My grandfather was a progressive man for his time. He was fond of reading preferring Russian classics to any other books. He was very fond of music: opera and symphonic music. He went to the opera House in Kharkov few times a year and dreamed that there would be a time, when he could watch operas staying at home. This was long before the invention of TV. My father's family wasn't quite religious. My grandmother and grandfather didn't attend a synagogue or raise their children religious, but they tried to observe Jewish traditions. I don't know whether they celebrated Sabbath. My father never mentioned this to me. However, the family got together for a meal on Pesach and Rosh Hashanah. My grandfather wanted his children to get secular education and implemented this dream.