

Freida Usatinskaya



This is my mother Freida Usatinskaya (nee Pivchik). The photo was taken in Gaisin in 1914.

The picture was given to my mother's friend Sophia Dukhovna, who wrote the following verse, dedicated to Freida, on the back: 'My friend, my guardian, my angel! Oh, Thou, that nobody can compete with! I love you. You are in every breath. I see your image in all beauties of nature. I see your features in everything that is beautiful. Dearest Fania! I love you madly. Yours, Sopha Dukhovnaya'. 10 July 1914.

My mother was born in Gaisin in 1896. She finished a Jewish elementary school and then studied at the lower secondary school in Gaisin. She didn't finish it. I think she had to go to work to earn her living. I don't know what she did for a living. My mother could read and write in Yiddish and Russian very well. Regretfully, that's all I know about the life of my mother before she met my father. I know that her parents were very religious and that she was raised that way, too. She observed Jewish traditions, celebrated holidays and prayed. My mother must have been very poor and must have had a hard life if she agreed to marry a widower with two children. This means that she had no choice. Perhaps, she never talked about her youth for that reason.

My mother had two sisters and a brother. They got secondary education. They left their parents' home as soon as they grew up. They were all religious people and observed Jewish laws and traditions throughout their life. My mother's oldest sister, born in 1890, moved to Palestine with her husband. I don't know her name or the names of her three daughters, who were born in the Promised Land. Sarra, my mother's second sister, born in 1895, and her brother Gedali lived in Bessarabia. Gedali Pivchik, born in 1893, was a shochet in the town of Zguritsa.