

Faina Volper's Grandfather Shmil Makovetskiy And Grandmother Tsyrl Makovetskaya



My mother's parents: my grandfather Shmil Makovetskiy, rabbi of the village of Matsevichi of Gritsevsk district and my grandmother Tsyrl Makovetskaya.

My mother's family lived in Matsevichi village of Gritsevsk district. There were 20 to 30 Jewish families in this town, but there was a synagogue and cheder in the town. There was also a Ukrainian primary school in the village. Jews in Matsevichi were farmers, handicraftsmen and tradesmen. People had no conflicts and supported one another. There were no Jewish pogroms in the village; only after the revolution gangs came to the village. (Editors note: In 1920s there were many gangs in Ukraine.) Bandits needed food and self-made vodka, food and money and they didn't care whether it was a Jewish or non-Jewish family that they attacked.

My mother's father Shmil Makovetskiy was a rabbi. He came to Matsevichi after finishing his studies in yeshiva. I don't know where he came from. He was born in the late 1860s. I saw his photograph. He was a very handsome man. He had a long well groomed beard. My grandfather was a very religious and reserved man. He perished in 1920, 7 years before I was born and this is all I know about him.

My grandfather perished in 1920. Three Polish horse riders came to his house once. My grandmother gave them some food and talked with them in Polish. The Polish men were pleased with the reception. They thanked my grandparents and left. My grandfather went outside. He needed to climb to the attic. One of these Polish men turned back and shot my grandfather in his head, probably for no reason. My grandfather was in his early 50s when he perished. Many Jews came to his funeral. He was buried according to Jewish tradition at the Jewish cemetery.

I remember my grandmother Tsyrl on my mother's side. My grandmother was born in Matsevichi in 1860s. She was a short and fat woman. She was wearing a wig. I asked my mother why my grandmother was wearing a wig and my mother told that such was a rule for a rabbi's wife. It was a nicely combed wig with a lock on the forehead. My grandmother always wore long dark dresses with long sleeves and many small buttons. She was a very nice and kind woman.

Before I was born there was a big fire in my grandmother Tsyrl's house. My grandmother had severe burns especially troublesome on one leg. The wounds didn't heal and my parents took my grandmother to their house to look after her. She died at our home in 1929.