

## Israel Geller And His Family



This is a picture of my husband Israel Geller's family. His mother Beshyva Geller, nee Vilenskaya is standing. My husband's grandmother Manita Vilenskaya is sitting, my three-year-old husband and his cousin Feiga are next to her. The photo was taken in Brusilov in 1914. My grandfather's older sister Beshyva, born in 1875, married Aron Geller, one of the ancestors to the 6th generation of famous Israel Besht [Baal Shem Tov], the founder of Hasidism, a just man and a miracle worker. Aron Gellers' father was a senior man at the synagogue in Khotin, chairman of the Jewish

community and a well-respected man. They were very poor and decided to arrange for their sons to marry girls with a profession. Beshyva, who grew up in a poor family learned to sew at the age of ten and when she grew up she became a skilled dressmaker for poor Jews. Aron was neither smart - although he descended from a wise man - nor could he earn his living. They lived in Beshyva parents' house in Brusilov. They had two children: a son named Israel, born in 1910, and a girl, whose name I don't remember, born in 1913. In 1919 Beshyva's husband Aron died of typhoid. His six-year-old daughter passed away shortly afterwards. Beshyva was raising her son. Her son, Israel, studied in cheder. I don't know where he studied in Brusilov. In the middle of the 1920s Israel and Beshyva moved to Kiev. Israel went to the 7th grade then. After he finished school he worked as a laborer and loader, then he finished a rabfak and an agricultural college. In due time he became an outstanding scientist, agronomist, soil specialist, and an expert in growing sugar beets. Beshyva lived with her son's family in Kiev. She died at the age of 102. Feiga, was the 'black sheep' of the family, as they say. She didn't work and liked parties and drinking. People even said that she was hardly selective in her relationships with men. Sometime in 1925 she went swimming with a group of her companions and never returned. They said Feiga was drunk and drowned in the river.