

Inna Rajskaya's Paternal Grandparents, Feiga-Tsipa Elkonovna Shif And Iosif Shif.



In this photograph you see my paternal grandparents - Feiga-Tsipa Elkonovna Shif (nee Borishanskaya) and Iosif Shif. The photo was made in a photo studio in Bad-Nauheim, Germany during a trip to this health resort for treatment. Both are dressed up. We can see Grandpa's golden watch-chain. My grandmother was born in 1867 in Minsk. She had many sisters and brothers, but I

don't know their names. After the Revolution [1917] some of them emigrated to the United States, but unfortunately the family lost contact with them. I myself never knew my grandmother; she died when my father was 14. Her family was quite wealthy: her father was a merchant. Everyone was remarkably kind; they brought up not only their own children, but supported other, poor families. I remember hearing about one family that they supported greatly - the Mazel family. All the children in my grandmother's family, especially the girls, had their schooling at home: their parents hired tutors who came to the house. One of those teachers was my grandfather Iosif. He was born in 1870, but where? I don't know. He lived his entire life in Minsk. I know little about his family, just that they were not very prosperous but tried nonetheless to educate their children. In 1890 Grandpa completed his education in pedagogy and became a teacher in a Jewish school in Minsk. He taught young children both in his own family and in other families, among them the Borishanskies children. And so it happened that my grandmother and Grandpa Iosif fell in love and later got married. After the Revolution the family, like others, was stripped of all their property, and the apartment in Zakhariievskaya was confiscated. They had to buy a small house in Minsk not far from the Opera theater. It was a modest one-story building, but it was always scrupulously clean; my aunt maintained it rigorously. There were gorgeous plates and dishes and very beautiful silver spoons. Our family still has, for example, family heirlooms such as silver spoons with the inscription 'A spoonful of happiness' written on them in Yiddish. These were presented by my grandfather to a niece as a wedding present. When I got married, my aunt (she was alive at that time) gave them to me, and now I handed them down to my daughter.