

Gitlia Vollerner's Passport

[illegible]

This is the passport of my father's second wife, Gitlia Tetelbaum, issued by the town council of Tulchin. On the back there is a stamp confirming the marriage between Miss Gitlia Tetelbaum and widower Khanin-Liepa Vollerner. My mother died during the epidemic of Spanish flu in 1915. In 1916 my father married my mother's cousin, Gitlia Tetelbaum. I've never called her stepmother, not even in my thoughts. My brother and I called her our second mother. Gitlia's parents lived in Tulchin before they moved to Odessa in the 1910s. I don't know why they moved. Gitlia's father, Moishe-Haim Tetelbaum, was my paternal grandfather's brother. He was born in Tulchin. Gitlia was born in 1892. She studied at the dentistry school in Kiev for four years. After finishing this school she passed a state exam at the Medical Faculty of the Royal University of Saint Vladimir to receive a doctor's diploma that gave her the right to practice medicine. According to Gitlia's passport,

signed by a rabbi, 'Gitlia Tetelbaum, a 24-year-old, dentist, married on 22nd June 1916 Khanin-Liepa Vollerner, a 36-year-old widower, dentist'. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a rabbi and a chuppah arranged by Gitlia's parents in Odessa. After the wedding the newly-weds moved to Kiev. Gitlia was a housewife and a loving mother for me and my brother. She didn't have children of her own. My parents weren't particularly religious, but they observed Jewish traditions. They didn't follow the kashrut. I remember that when my grandfather Yankel came to visit us Gitlia showed him dishes for dairy products and for meat products, but she just pretended that we had separate utensils. We always celebrated Sabbath at home. Gitlia lit candles and said a prayer. We prayed for the health and wealth of our family and relatives and sat down for a festive dinner.