

Tsyliya Spivak's Uncle Ziama Kaplan With His Wife Lisa Kaplan And Their Son Boris Kaplan



My uncle Ziama Kaplan with his wife Lisa and their son Boris. This photo was taken in a photo shop in Chernigov in 1931. He gave this photo to my parents for the memory.

My mother came from a big Jewish family living in Sednevo town in Chernigov province, 200 km from Kiev. I've never been to Sednevo, but my mother told me that it was like any other small Jewish town. There was a synagogue in the town. Jews commonly dealt in crafts and trade. My mother's father Borukh Kaplan, my grandfather, was a tradesman. My grandmother Tsyvah, who was 12 years younger than my grandfather, was a housewife and looked after the children. Sometimes she helped my grandfather in the store in the house where the family lived. They didn't have any other employees working for them in the store. They were selling haberdashery and household goods in their little store and Ukrainian customers of my grandfather from surrounding villages often came by my grandfather's store to buy what they needed. My grandfather got along well with Ukrainians. In 1919 his big family moved to Chernigov [regional center in the north of Ukraine, 220 km from Kiev] after selling their remaining belongings. In Chernigov my grandfather bought a small two-bedroom apartment in a private house where they lived until before the Great Patriotic War. My grandmother and grandfather were very religious people. They ate kosher food and celebrated Sabbath. The whole family got together on big religious Jewish holidays. There were 12 children born to the family, but before the Great Patriotic War there were seven of them left.

The rest of the children died in infancy.

Ziama, approximately born in 1900, also dealt in trade. Before the revolution he was helping my grandfather and afterward he worked in a store. Ziama had a Jewish wife. Her name was Lisa and she was a housewife. Ziama and Lisa had two children: Boris, born in 1927, and Fania, born in 1932. During the Great Patriotic War Ziama was recruited to the army and perished at the front and Lisa and her children, our family and all sisters were in evacuation in Orsk in the Urals (today Russia), 3500 km from Kiev. They returned to Chernigov at the same time after the war. We were all poor after the war, but Lisa really lived in poverty. Shortly after he returned Boris fell ill and died of cancer in the early 1950s and Lisa lived a year or two longer. After Fania returned to Chernigov my mother's sister Zelda who got married and left to the Far East with her husband, took her with them. Zelda actually raised Fania and helped her to enter a Pedagogical College. Fania married a Russian guy. Her surname is Kokina. She lives with her husband and daughter who has grown-up children in Tver, Russia.