

Emilia Kotliar's Father Peisach Kotliar's Family



This photo was taken in 1920 in Vasilkov.

It is my father's family in the photograph:

standing from left to right: Yakov Aizenberg, my father's sister Sarah's husband, my father's brother Volf Kotliar, my father's sister Clara Kotliar, my father's sister Feiga Sidorenko (nee Kotliar), my father's brother Yakov Kotliar, my father Peisach Kotliar, my father's brother Israel Kotliar.

Sitting from left to right: Yakov's wife Sarah, stranger, grandmother Mendel Kotliar, grandfather Efraim Kotliar, unknown woman with a child. Sitting on the floor are two unknown people and the third from the left is my uncle's brother Avraam.

My family came from Vasilkov [30 km from Kiev], a small town in Ukraine. The majority of population in Vasilkov was Jewish, but there were also Ukrainian residents in it.

I visited it when I was very small and I don't remember anything. My paternal grandfather's name was Efraim Kotliar. His family led a patriarchal way of life. They were respected people in the town.

My grandfather was wealthy. He owned a business. He was a glasscutter and made frames. There were 8 children in the family and all had higher education.

All of his sons, and there were 5 of them, used to help my grandfather in his shop. My father Peisach Kotliar was the only son who didn't help his father in the shop. He was an idol in the family being talented and having all excellent marks at school. My grandfather used to say: 'I don't need your sawdust, I need your marks'.

My father studied in a realschule. Its students got a good technical and mathematical education. I don't know for sure, but I think my grandfather had a house having his business. My grandfather was a merry man. The family sang very well.

My father's younger brother Yasha had a particularly strong and beautiful voice. When the family got together they sang sitting at the table. They sang Ukrainian and Jewish folk songs.

My father's brother Yakov studied with my father in Moscow College of Light Industry and I've known uncle Yasha since childhood. I didn't see my father's other brothers and don't know what happened to them.

My father's mother Mendel Kotliar had a meek character. She was bringing quietude, order and peace into the houses and demanded that her children made no mess of it. She was a housewife. Their house was always clean and cozy.

My grandmother taught the girls to do craftwork, sew and embroider. There was a custom in their family: whatever problems one had they had to wipe their shoes on a welcome rug and smile.

They had to leave all their problems on the porch. There was a cheerful atmosphere at home. They loved each other very much and respected parents in the family. Undoubtedly, they observed all Jewish traditions in the past times.

There was a synagogue and a Jewish community in Vasilkov. Unfortunately, I don't know how religious my father's parents were or how they observed Jewish traditions. I know that their older daughter Feiga after finishing a college in Sverdlovsk moved my grandfather and grandmother to live with her in Sverdlovsk in the Ural in about 1000 km from Moscow shortly before the Great Patriotic War.

My grandmother died in 1942 and my grandfather died in 1943 in Sverdlovsk and there they were buried.