

Arkadi Milgrom's Grandmother Leya Milgrom



My grandmother Leya Milgrom. This photo was taken in Krasilov shortly before she died in 1940.

Leya Milgrom, nee Gleizer, was born to the Jewish family of tailor Nukhim Gleizer in Krasilov in 1876. I only knew my grandmother's older brother Iosif Gleizer of my grandmother's family. Iosif was born in the 1860s. He lived with his wife Tsupa and their children in Krasilov. Iosif and Tsupa had ten children: Yan, Moishe, Shoil, Shmil, Yona, Tula, Tuba, Sarra and Rieva. Moishe moved to USA in the early 1900s. All other children lived in Kiev. After Iosif died in the middle of the 1930s Tsupa also moved to Kiev. During the Great Patriotic War Tsupa was in evacuation somewhere in the Ural. She died in Kiev after the war. Yona is the only living Iosif's child. He lives in Israel and occasionally sends me holiday greetings. Iosif's grandchildren live all over the world. I have no contacts with them.

My grandmother was deeply religious. Leya wore a wig during the day and before going to bed she put on a lace nightcap. My grandmother had an imperious character and her daughters-in-law called her 'Catherine the Second', a Russian Empress with an imperious character. My grandmother was actually the head of the family even when her children grew up and had their own families. The family celebrated Jewish holidays and Sabbath. My grandmother always followed kashrut strictly, even though she cooked for their visitors with Ukrainians among them. My grandmother and grandfather had four children: one daughter and three sons.

In 1920 my sister Dvoira was born. On 20 July 1924 I was born. We lived in grandfather Iosif's house. There were four families living in this big house and four adult women: grandmother Leya, my father's sister Golda, my mother and later - my father brother Berl's wife Malka. All of them obeyed grandmother Leya who watched that there were no arguments and misunderstandings between the housewives.