

Gitl Velikaya With A Cousin



This is a picture of my maternal grandmother Gitl Velikaya and a cousin of mine. I don't know her name. The photo was taken in the yard of my grandmother's home in Khmel'nitskiy in 1965. My grandmother, Gitl Velikaya, was born in Murafa in 1861. I don't remember her maiden name. Her first husband was a teacher at cheder. Something went wrong in the marriage and they got divorced. Grandfather Velvl was her second husband. When they got married she was 30 and my

grandfather was 22. Grandfather said that all guys in the village were envious when he married Gitl. She was a tiny woman with a thin waist. She made clothes herself and liked to dress up. She knew Hebrew and was religious. She sang prayers in Hebrew at the synagogue and other women joined in with her. My grandparents lived in a small house with earthen floors. The front door opened to a hallway from which a door led into the living room and the kitchen. My grandparents had a bedroom with whitewashed walls. There was a small backyard with a shed where my grandmother kept a cow and chickens. She also kept goats because she believed that goat milk was very nutritious. In the winter she took the goats into the house to keep them warm. She tied them to her bed. There were apple trees and a cherry tree close to the house. My grandfather was the manager of a fish farm at a Russian count's estate before the Revolution of 1917. The count had ponds and sold fish. My grandmother was a housewife. The family had enough food to make a good living. During the war there was a Jewish ghetto in Murafa. A Christian priest lived across the street from my grandmother's. He respected my grandmother and her family and helped them to survive by bringing them flour, cereals and vegetables. The Christian church supported Jews during the war. After the war my grandmother moved in with her daughter Donia's family. Grandmother Gitl died in 1966 at the age of 105. She was buried in accordance with Jewish traditions.