

RG Number:

RG-50.632*0005

Interview conducted on July 17, 2005 by A. Kushkova, M. Treskunov, V. Fedchenko

Interview Summary:

Frida Isaakovna Pecherskaia (FP), born in 1927 in Bratslav, her daughter Sima 52-54 years old (resides in Israel for 9 years, visits her mother); Valentina Bentsionovna Popivker (VP), born in 1933 (neighbor)

FP – was born in Bratslav, one of five children, the eldest girl. When the war started, her father was taken into the army. Her brother volunteered at age seventeen; he was a tankist and was blown up to pieces. She and her family were marched from Bratslav on foot to Pechora camp. Of all her siblings, only she survived. She met her husband in Bratslav in 1945. She worked at a beer factory; he returned from the war an invalid. At her wedding she served two glasses of sunflower seeds, a piece of bread and tea. At the time she was living with her aunt – her father’s sister. There was no chuppah at her wedding.

Her mother had been married under a chuppah at a cemetery – in order not to get sick. Her parents were very poor. He was an orphan from Tulchin. Her mother was killed at the camp at age 34. Her father was a water carrier. In Yiddish he was called “balegule” (shtetel’s cart-guy). As a girl, she carried a stool for her grandfather to the synagogue on Friday-Saturday and waited for him outside on the street. Other children also waited on the street, as there was little room in the synagogue. Women and men were separated in one room. Her mother never lit the stove on Shabbat. She had made tsimmes and fish for Shabbat. She made yuch (fish gravy) and lokshen (noodles). Her grandmother prayed with a siddur (prayerbook). She began her studies at age 7 in a Jewish school in Bratslav, but Jewish school was destroyed by fire six months later, so she transferred to a Ukrainian school. For Passover they bought an egg and baked matzo. They had separate kosher dishes for Passover. On Yom Kippur they prepared gefilte fish, kugel, special compote, and tsimmes. Her mother put on a kerchief and lit a candle holder holding two candles. Her father wore talles (tallit). She began to fast on Yom Kippur at 8 years old. They “shlogen kapures” (transferred sins to a slaughtered chicken before Yom Kippur by moving it in a circle around one’s head.) A Ukrainian woman heat up the food for them. Sukkot was a festive holiday. They build a sukkah, danced and sang. Children were given “Hannukah gelt” and candy and lit candles. The lit candles on Shabbat. Also celebrated Purim and Shevuot. Her mother baked umen-tashen (homentashen) -- poppy seed pastries for Purim and boimebilkes - -sweet rolls. She put a cat in a cradle when she was about to give birth – also gave candy and money to children.

There was an old kosher butcher Moishe-shoikhet who also performed gemolet (circumcisions).

When someone died, relatives sat shivah for seven days and ate on the floor.

She settled in Tulchin in 1945.

Sima – recounts an episode when she baked a matzo cake and offered some to a Ukrainian woman who refused to eat it because “it was mixed with blood of children.” She was told this at her church.

VP – On Peisah (Passover) a girl or a boy is chosen to look for matzo. Children were given “Hannukah gelt”. There were two kosher butchers. After giving birth, a mother did not leave her hut for eight days to avoid evil eye – anore ni gibn. Also to avoid evil eye they washed a glass in the baby’s urine and put the glass upside down. Pregnant women could not be denied assistance. Pregnant women and children were not allowed to go to the cemetery.

Language: Russian, Yiddish

Geographic Name: Tulchin (Ukraine), Bratslav (Ukraine)