The Shkolnik Family of Yanova

Dr. Seymour Saltzman researched the Shkolnik family over many years resulting in the publication of a family history in 1989. The following is taken from his family history published here with permission.

Yanova and the Shkolniks

Most of the Shkolniks left for America while Yanova was under Russian rule. Only part of the Epstein family emigrated after WW I while it was “Polish,” thus accounting for considerable confusion when we tried to determine the nationality of our parents and grandparents. Four branches, tragically, remained in Russia: the family of Velvel Shkolnik, youngest son of Avrum Yitzhak; most of the family of Bluma Altman, daughter of Basha Feigel Shkolnik Altman; much of the Pinsky family, the children of Shifra Shkolnik Pinsky; and at least some members of the family of the “other” Velvel Shkolnik, the fourth child of our patriarch, Baruch Shkolnik and his wife, Esther.

The first Jews settled in Ivanova in the 1620’s. It is not known with certainty when the Shkolniks first appeared in Yanova but we may reason as follows. It is known with certainty that Lazar Shkolmik (Lazar Shulman) was living in Yanova in the late 1880’s. It is most probable that his father, Avrum Yitzhak Shkolnik (c. 1825-1900) and his grandfather, Baruch Shkolnik (c.1800-1875) lived there as well. If Baruch’s father also lived there, there would have been Shkolniks in Yanova as early as the late 1700’s.

Yanova was a small stetl with Jews comprising the majority of its population, 56% in 1847 and 62% in 1897. As it began to become industrialized, members of the Shkolnik family also became involved with various enterprises. Lazar Shkolnik and his son Mordachai (Max Shulman) were engaged in the wool industry. Machinery for cleaning wool was located in Max’s house. Michele Ratnovsky (Max Ronnick) was a grain merchant in the nearby town of Motol.

Most of the Shkolniks were not affluent however, and readily joined the waves of emigrants as they left the Pale for America. Only Basha Feigel Shkolnik Altman somehow made her way to Palestine where she fulfilled her wish to die in the Holy Land and be buried on the Mount of Olives. Most of the descendents of these immigrants have continued to live in America. A few have chosen to move to Israel. (It is understood that many years ago several cousins moved to Argentina.)

The children of Baruch Shkolnik (c. 1800-c. 1865) and Esther:

Avrum Yitzhak Shkolnik (c. 1825-c. 1902) married Pasel

Basha Feigel Shkolnik (c. 1845-1907) married Lazar Altman

Shifrie (Sophie) Shkolnik (c. 1845-c. 1910) married Julius Pinsky (c. 1840-c. 1905)

Velvel Shkolnik (c. 1840-c.1910) married unknown