

Larissa Khusid's Father Iona Khusid During His Service In The Tsarist Army



My father, Iona Khusid, in 1916, during his service in the tsarist army, when he was 25 years old. My father was born on August 5, 1892 in the town of Stepantsy, in the district of Kanev, in the province of Kiev. My father was a very shy and reserved man. He didn't like to talk about himself or

his family, and therefore, I can't give you an accurate picture of his life. After my father died, his neighbor, Abram Linkevich from Stepantsy, who knew my grandfather and his family, came over to our house and told me much more about my father's family than my father had. My father received a Jewish education in a cheder, but that wasn't enough for him. He wanted to study and become an educated and intelligent man. He was right to think that only a good education could help him to lift himself out of the poverty of his little Jewish town. When my father turned 13 he said 'good-bye' to his parents and went to Kiev on foot. There he found a temporary job and shelter in the house of a woman who sold milk. My father slept on a windowsill in the basement that served as her shop. In return for food and lodging he had to unload milk carts that arrived from villages early in the morning, wash out milk cans, and perform other related duties. In the evenings my father studied on that same windowsill that served as his bed. Sometimes he studied so late that the milkwoman told him to switch off the lamp. By working and studying very hard, my father managed to earn a degree in economics. When World War I began, my father was recruited into the tsarist army. He was a Private in the infantry and finished the war with the rank of Private First Class of Putivl Regiment 127. In September 1916 my father was severely wounded. His legs were broken and he was sent to the hospital, where he remained until May 1917. After being released, my father was dismissed from the army as an invalid. During his service in the tsarist army, father was awarded two George's Crosses - the highest award that Privates could get. My father never told me what deeds of his were so rewarded. I don't know what my father did after his release from the hospital, but I know that he was in Odessa in 1920, and worked at the Odessa province's Soviet farm. There, he met there my mother's older brother, Abram Ortenberg, who introduced my father to my mother's family.