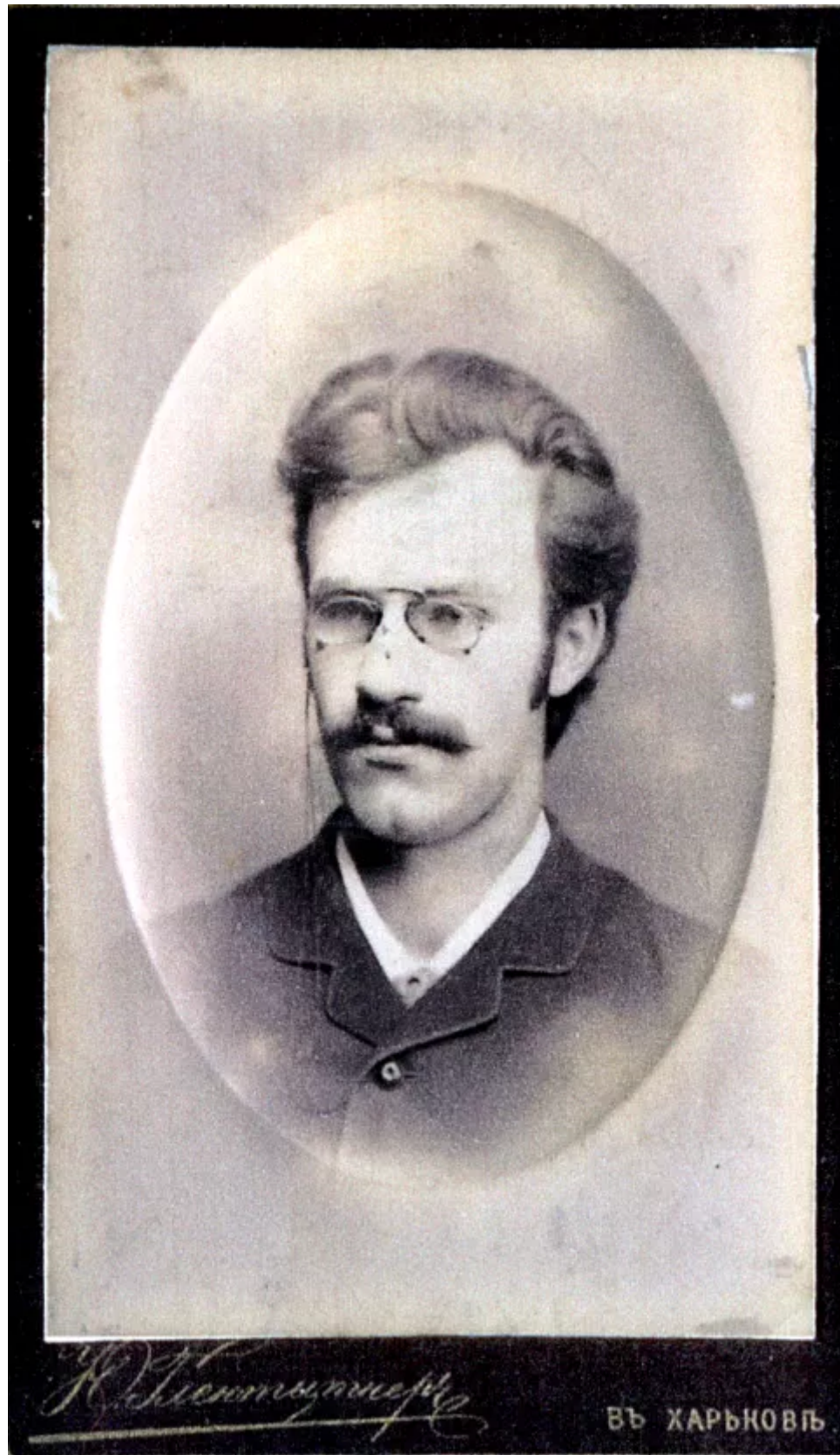


Dimitri Kamyshan's Grandfather Albert Zilberberg



This is my grandfather, Albert Zilberberg. The photo was taken in the 1880s when he had just started preparations for the opening of the biggest printing house in Ukraine.

My grandfather was born in Kharkov in 1860. He went to grammar school and had a special technical education, but I don't know where he studied. There were no signs of religiosity in the interior of the house - it was the standard home of a rich European man not a Jew. What I mean by that is that they didn't have special dishes for Pesach, silver chanukkiyah, religious literature, mezuzah on the door or any other general accessories of the Jewish way of life. I remember my grandfather well: he was a tall, stately, bold-headed man. When he lay down to rest I used to sneak from behind pulling him by the down on his head. He liked to play with me, probably because my father was his favorite son. He used to walk with a carved stick. There was a long stiletto fastened inside. I found it after his death. After he died it also turned out that he had had several lovers. He was a handsome man and my grandmother was a beautiful woman, but he probably needed some variety in his love life.

My grandfather was a professional and his printing house was very profitable. In 1918 it was nationalized by the Soviet power. My grandmother told me that its employees went on strike when the printing house was expropriated by the Soviet authorities. They wanted their master back. And so the authorities appointed my grandfather director and then executive manager of the factory. My grandfather died in a road accident - he was hit by a bus - in 1933 when I was 7 years old. He didn't have a religious funeral. He was carried to the cemetery in a coffin on a black horse-driven cart. The horses had black horsecloths on their backs.

People still remember my grandfather. When I went to Kharkov twelve years ago tenants from one of my grandfather's mansions in the city center saw me and exclaimed, 'Look! This is the owner of the house'.