

Solomon Manevich's Grandfather Yankel-Leizer-Evzer Katz



This is my maternal grandfather Yankel-Leizer-Evzer Katz. The photo was taken in Chaussy in the 1900s.

I know little about my mother's family. My grandmother Sarrah and grandfather died before I was born and I know about them what my mother and her brother told me. My grandparents were born in a small town of Chahussy in Belarus in the 1850s. They lived in this town all their life. My mother told me that Chaussy where she was born was a small town with numerous Jewish population. Jews lived in small houses in central parts of the town.

My grandfather belonged to middle class. He had Jewish education. I don't know whether he finished cheder or studied at yeshivah or was self-educated, but he had deep knowledge of the Jewish religion, traditions and history. Leizer read Torah and Talmud and had reputation of a wise man in the town. He held an official position at the synagogue and many Jews came to ask his advice on everyday matters: how to teach their children, or what to buy and how to deal with family budget. The family lived in strict accordance with halakhah, followed the kashrut and celebrated Sabbath and all Jewish holidays. My mother didn't tell me any details since she and her sisters and brothers found their father's requirement to strictly observe Jewish religious traditions a burden. It wasn't a burden only for Nohim, one of my mother's brothers. The family was very poor since grandfather didn't know any craft to enable him to provide for the family and reading religious books did not bring any earnings. The children were leaving their home when they were able to do some work to provide for themselves. Grandfather and grandmother died in 1910s - long before I was born.