

Sima Shvarts' Father Yankel Shvarts With Friends



My father Yankel Shvarts (center) with his friends during his service in the tsarist army. The photo was taken in 1914 in Rzhishev. My father was born in Rzhishev in 1883. I never knew my father because he was killed in the war. I know that he worked as a roofer. I still have a silver spoon that he once brought for me. Once when he was working on the roof of a house, he found this spoon in the attic. He brought it home and said: 'Our little daughter should eat only from this spoon until she grows up'. So, I still have this spoon. My father's parents had a better life financially than my

mother's parents. My father's father owned a business that dealt with the loading and unloading of goods to and from ships that docked in Rzhishev. Grandfather's name was Mordko Shvarts, and grandmother's name was Rakhil Shvarts. My father was the eldest child in the family. He had brothers, Ruvim and Naum, then a sister Manya, then brothers Shmilek and Menachem, and then sisters Etya and Liza. I am not sure if they were born exactly in this order, but I think so. The brothers helped their father in his business. They also had a store and sold things there. Women certainly didn't work outside the house. Before getting married they helped their mother, and after getting married their husbands provided for them - this was a tradition in all Jewish families. I remember the house of my father's parents because mother took me there for the summer holidays when we were already living in Kiev. There was a large thoroughfare in Rzhishev that led to the market, and the main square in the town was a market, where all people came together. Grandfather's house stood in a small street right next to that thoroughfare.