

Israel Gurovich



This is my paternal grandfather, Israel Gurovich. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1930.

My paternal grandfather was born in Matusovo in 1870. He studied at cheder. He spoke fluent Yiddish and knew prayers in Hebrew. My father told me that my grandfather was an estate manager in Matusov, but I don't know any details about it. My grandparents got married that same year they met. They both came from religious families and had a traditional wedding with a chuppah. Grandmother Ethel was a housewife. My grandparents had six children.

In 1912 my grandparents and their children moved to Odessa, but I don't know for what reason. They settled down in Meschanskaya Street and in 1923 they moved to a house in Bazarnaya Street in the center of the town. Their children and grandchildren also lived in this house. Their other three children were born there. Grandfather Israel was a very kind and nice man. He got up very early each morning to make the round of his children and grandchildren asking them if they needed his help.

In 1922, during a typhoid epidemic in Odessa, my grandmother fell ill and died. She was buried at the 1st Jewish cemetery. There was a Jewish funeral. After Grandmother Ethel died my grandfather remarried in approximately 1923. His second wife's name was Polia. From when I remember my grandfather – the middle of the 1930s – he worked as an electrician at the buttery. My grandfather was a self-educated man. He was very handy and could do many things.

On Jewish holidays the whole family got together at Grandfather Israel and my father's stepmother Polia's apartment. They taught us all rules to be followed to observe Jewish holidays accordingly. During seder at Pesach my cousins and I repeated traditional questions after Ms. Polia. We always ate matzah at Pesach. I don't know where they got it in those years. At Purim Ms. Polia made hamantashen with poppy seed filling and treated all children to those pies. She and Grandfather Israel went to synagogue on all holidays and fasted at Yom Kippur.

I remember the family gathering on my grandfather's 70th birthday in 1940. All his children and grandchildren came to greet him and it was a noisy and merry celebration. We all loved Grandfather dearly.