

Bencion Herman



This is my paternal grandfather Bencion Herman. This photo was taken in Tomashpol in the early 1920s.

My father's parents Perl and Bencion Herman were wealthy. They were of the same age, they were born in 1886 in the village of Alexandrovka, 25 kilometers from Tomashpol. There were three or four Jewish families in this Ukrainian village.

My grandfather Bencion's brother lived in a village across the river. I don't remember his name. I remember his daughters' names: Etia, Haya and Esia. They often came to see their father.

Grandfather Bencion had education. He had Jewish education, could read and write in Ukrainian and even Russian. He was a postman in his village for many years and his fellow villagers respected and loved him.

Grandmother Perl had little education. I have a towel that her mother, my great-grandmother, embroidered for her wedding. I've always kept this wedding towel and even the colors on it haven't faded. There is 'To dear bridegroom and bride, good evening, all!' embroidered on it.

Perl was a very active person. She took care of her big household. There was an orchard around the house and a vegetable garden where they grew vegetables for the family and for sale. Perl also kept poultry and cattle: cows and pigs. The family supported its well-being working tirelessly, but during the period of famine in 1932-33 authorities took away almost all their bread and food stocks and Perl, the only one of the family, starved to death. So I never met this grandmother.

My father's parents were religious Jews. Grandfather Bencion was particularly religious. There was no synagogue in Alexandrovka and Jews from Alexandrovka and a neighboring village got together in one house to pray. My grandmother Perl was so busy about the house that she hardly had any time left for religion and prayers.