

Iosif Seviov



This is my maternal grandfather Iosif Seviov. This is a copy of the only grandfather's picture. Here he is 46. The original is in the museum of Narva Jewish community. The picture was made in Narva in 1913.

There is little I know about Seviov. It is as pity. Grandfather, must have been a very good and unusual person. He was born in 1868 in the city of Gdov, Pskov, oblast, Russia, about [700 km from Moscow, close to Estonian border]. I even do not know if it still exists. Great grandfather was also the soldier of the tsarist army. He had served for 25 years. When he was decommissioned from the army, he married. There was a pale of settlement in Russia, and Jews were no allowed to live anywhere they were willing to. This did not refer to those Jews who had served in the army- they were permitted to chose from larger territory of Russia. There were several children, but I did not know them. Grandfather was a tailor. He moved to Narva from Gdov. I do not know how grandparents met. Probably it was a prearranged marriage. When they got married, grandmother moved to Narva. Grandmother, as most of the married Jewish women was a homemaker,. She gave birth to children, raised them and took care of the house. Grandparents did not have their own house. The rented the 2nd floor of the loghouse from one Estonian man. The first floor of the house was occupied by the landlord and his family. There were 7 children in the family. The eldest son was Isaac, then was daughter Esfir was born on, the third was my future mother Rebecca, born on 1 February 1906. At the end of 1907 son Lazar was born in son and in couple of years another son, Mulya, and then another one, Abram. The last child was daughter Ida.

Grandfather was very religious. Narva Jew respected him, listened to his words, though he was a simple man. He was considered almost a saint. He kept the door open for people and almost

anybody could come to him for a support. If the new-comer did not have a place to stay, he went to grandpa. He was given food and a place to sleep. Of course, grandfather always tried helping people the best way he could. He was the only bread-winner in the family, though the family was large. If grandfather could not help anybody himself, he went to other Jews and said: "Need help!". If grandfather said it, nobody refused him. There was a trarist regiment in Narva and there were some Jewish soldiers. They were given absence without leave, where could they go in a strange? Grandpa always had a door open to them, especially in Sabbath or on the days of Jewish holidays. We had a lot of people in our house on Jewish people. Some people forgot about grandfather, but he was friends with some of them. Once, one Jew, whom grandfather helped, left for America. He got settled well there and started suggesting grandfather move to America with the family. He also offered his support. Grandfather started processing the documents for departure. It was the year of 1913. Pictures were needed for the documents to be processed, and grandfather went to rabbi to ask where he could take picture for the photograph. Of course, rabbi gave him permission. It was the only photograph of grandfather that I have. Grandfather was 46 in that picture. When grandfather got the documents, WW1 was unleashed and they could not leave. In 1920 grandfather Iosif Seviov died. He was buried according to the Jewish rite in the Jewish cemetery in Narva. All Narva Jews came to his funeral. According to the Jewish law, the defunct cannot be brought in the synagogue with the exception of the prophets. The Narva Jewish community, which was rather large, made grandfather equal to the prophet, and brought him in the synagogue. They say it was very rare. Then they carried his coffin in hands for about 5 or 7 kilometers to the grave. It was a big honor for my grandfather for his living like a saint and helping people, taking care of those who needed support.