

Afraim Rokhlin



This is a photo of my paternal grandfather Afraim Rokhlin. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1905.

My paternal grandfather, Afrayim Rokhlin, was born in Gomel, Belarus, in 1887. My grandfather's family lived on the outskirts of Gomel, and his parents were engaged in farming. My great-grandfather's name was Hirsh Rokhlin, and my great-grandmother's name was Beyle.

There were several children in the family. My grandfather and his siblings finished a school in Gomel. It was difficult to continue education in tsarist Russia, due to the five percent quota for Jewish students. It was quite a challenge to fit into this quota, but still, this didn't hinder my grandfather from going to Odessa where he entered the Department of Dentistry at the university.

When he graduated, he couldn't find a job and someone told him that it was easier to find employment in Estonia. He went there and became a dental mechanic. That was when he invited his sisters Hanne and Riva to join him in Estonia. They entered the Department of Dentistry at Tartu University.

My grandfather got married in Tallinn. My grandmother's family had moved to Tallinn from Poland. My grandmother Eugenia Chapkowski was born in 1888.

My grandfather wasn't deeply religious. For his time he was an advanced character. He was a public activist and took part in various Jewish congresses and conferences. My grandfather was a member of the Jewish cultural society and various Jewish clubs. He attended various drama and music centers and even sang in some opera club. My grandfather was a member of the Bialik club

in Tallinn. It was a Jewish cultural club. He wrote poems and lectured on Jewish literature. He also took an active part in political life. My grandfather also lectured on political issues and made presentations to young people.

This was the way of life he led. He observed Jewish traditions, but it was a mere manifestation. My grandfather celebrated Jewish holidays at home and went to the synagogue on major holidays.