

Leib Abramson



This is my maternal grandfather Leib Abramson. This is my grandfather's only photograph that miraculously survived in our house that was robbed during the Great Patriotic War. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in the 1900s.

My mother's family lived in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. This was a nice green town. The Jewish population constituted about 70%. There were few synagogues in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. Two of them operated until the start of the Great Patriotic War, and the others were closed during the period of struggle against religion. There was a Jewish cemetery, few cheders and Jewish schools. The cheder was closed before the revolution, and one Jewish school worked as long as the start of the Great Patriotic War.

Jews resided in the central part of the town. There were few market places in the town. The biggest market place in the center of the town worked 3 times a week. There was a shochet working nearby and housewives took the chickens they had bought to him to have them slaughtered. On Thursday and Friday villagers sold living chickens and fish at the market. They knew that Jewish housewives made chicken broth and gefilte fish for Sabbath and took their chance to earn more. Housewives often ordered dairy products from farmers and they delivered them to their homes. Jews in Mogilyov-Podolskiy were craftsmen like my father and owned small stores. There were also Jewish lawyers, teachers, doctors. My grandmother told me there was a big Jewish community in Mogilyov-Podolskiy before the revolution. The community supported the needy. The community made arrangements for funerals, supported the Jewish hospital and the children's home for Jewish children. They also provided dowries to Jewish girls from poor families and covered expenses for

weddings. They collected contributions before Sabbath and Jewish holidays for poor Jews to have decent celebrations. The community stopped its existence after the revolution.

My maternal grandfather Leib Abramson, whom I didn't know, was born in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1870. Grandmother Surah was born in 1872 in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. Grandfather Leib was a cook and confectioner and cooked for weddings, birthday and other parties. He usually had a crew of assistants. My grandmother was a housewife. There were six children in the family. I cannot tell how much religious my mother's parents were. Before the war we had their only photo where my grandfather was wearing a yarmulke, a black suit and had a big beard. They observed Jewish traditions. My mother didn't tell me much about her childhood. She had a poor, hungry and hard childhood and these memories must have been hard for her. At the time that I remember my mother, her brother and sister and grandmother were not religious. They spoke Yiddish in the family and knew Ukrainian.

My grandfather Leib died in an accident in 1915. He was 45. When he was cooking for a wedding, the floor and the Russian stove collapsed. My grandfather fell into the basement and pieces of the stove fell on him. He had many injuries. He was bedridden for some time before he died. The family spent all their savings on his treatment. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Mogilyov-Podolskiy according to the Jewish traditions. His grave and gravestone with an inscription in Hebrew are still there.