

Frida Khatset's Grandfather Evzer Khatset



My grandfather Evzer Khatset in his room. Kiev, 1914.

The name of my grandfather on my father's side was Evzer Khatset. I guess my grandfather Evzer was born in 1850s. I don't know where he was born. Perhaps, he came from Kiev. The thing is when we were young it was not a custom in our family to share the memories or ask questions about the past. My grandfather was a merchant of guild 2. He was a leather dealer. I remember how my grandfather looked: he wore a black yarmulka, had a small beard with streaks of gray and a moustache, and he was a slender man. My grandmother and grandfather lived in the center of Kiev.

My grandmother and grandfather were deeply religious: my grandfather had a Torah and there was a mezuzah over their door: a box with a scroll with a prayer written on it. My grandfather had a black and cream striped tallit and a leather tefillin: two small boxes with long leather straps to be worn on the forehead and hands. My grandfather strictly observed Jewish traditions and went to the synagogue as long as his condition allowed. I remember that my mother and I went to my grandmother and grandfather when they were old and ill. I felt bored when she was taking care of them. Their apartment seemed very big to me: a big hallway, a dining room with high windows and several other rooms. My mother spoke Yiddish to my grandmother and grandfather and my grandfather spoke Russian with me since I didn't know Yiddish. I can hardly remember my grandmother. Her condition was very poor and I wasn't allowed to enter her room. . I remember a big table covered with a long tablecloth in the dining room. I used to hide under the table shouting 'Now seek me!' There was a lamp in a beautiful shade with fringe over the table, a clock in the

wooden casing with intricate carving, and the door panels were also decorated with carving. We have photos of my grandmother: she looks fat and kind, round-faced, with splendidly done hair wearing a magnificent hat with ostrich feathers.

Before the Revolution 1917, the Khatset family was wealthy: they could afford to take a vacation at the seashore in the Crimea or Caucasus.