

The Book, Written By Great-Grandfather Of The Interviewee



Parables of Solomon with comments 'Tohahat haim' by M.Lesman was published in Berdichev at Sheftel printing-house in 1893.

The author of the book was Moissey Lesman, my great-grandfather.

The title page reads that Moissey Mordekhay Lesman was born in Mogilev on the Dneper River and lived in Melitopol of Taurian province.

I believed, that the book was written by one of my grandfather's brothers (probably by Abram Lesman).

The book was handed over from person to person in our family by right of succession. I do not know Hebrew and know nothing about the contents of the book.

My paternal grandfather Boris Moisseevich was a poet. I have a book of his poems issued in 1890. He died very early, at the age of 37, from tuberculosis. I did not know him.

My grandfather had 2 brothers: Abram and Semen. They were called in a strange way: Abram 'Brichka' [Four-wheeler] and Semen 'Seriya' [Grey], and I do not know the reason.

They lived in Leningrad near the stadium named after Lenin, Zhdanovskaya embankment 3/1, 2nd floor (it is not in the center of the city, but on Petrogradskaya side). [At present Petrogradskaya side is one of the central districts of St. Petersburg.]

They had there an eight-room apartment. Later, after the Revolution of 1917, when the authorities started reducing space per person in living accommodation [they used to move poor homeless people to rich apartments of bourgeoisie], they gave four rooms to his relative Boris Zeydeman unbesought.

Abram Moisseevich was one of the most devout Jews in the town. Russian tsar Nicolas II held him in high respect and offered him a post of minister (sure, in case he denied his faith and accepted Christianity), but my uncle refused.

He wore ordinary (secular) clothes (a suit of clothes and a tie); he had no payes; He was very handsome, he had long gray hair, moustache and a beard. At that time all men had beards, and uncle Semen had it, too.

Uncle Abram celebrated all Jewish holidays; he could read Hebrew well; he was religious. And uncle Semen was not so religious, but he took part in celebration of all holidays.