

Boris Molodetski's Father Gersh Molodetski In The Army



This is my father Gersh Molodetski (in the center) in the army with his friends. This photo was taken in Vladivostok in 1912.

My father Gersh Molodetski was born in Grosulovo in 1891. The whole family built up their hopes with him as an older son. He studied in cheder and later learned to read and write in Russian by himself. My grandfather wanted him to become a rabbi and sent him to yeshivah in Kishinev when he turned 16. After studying there a year my father decided he didn't like it and ran away to Odessa. He stayed at the railway station in Odessa. He had no documents until Odessa police office issued a temporary residential permit to him. He managed to find a job.

In 1912 my father was recruited to the army. At first he served in an artillery unit in a fortress in Vladivostok and in 1913 he moved to Kharbin. In spring 1917 their regiment was sent to the Southern Front. When the train was in about 30 km from Grosulovo my father jumped off and walked to his village: he deserted the army. Nobody searched him. During the Civil War, in 1918 he was in a group of a self-defense unit consisting of local residents who were trying to defend their town from gangs raging in the vicinity. Once bandits requested a truce envoy to be sent to them. My father went there carrying a white cloth. They didn't reach any agreement, but when my father was on his way back they wounded him in his leg.

In late 1918 my father moved to Odessa. His acquaintance from Grosulovo let him stay in his dwelling and helped him to become an assistant accountant apprentice. Shortly afterward my father met my mother. I don't know any details.