Shmul Benderskiy

This is a picture of my grandfather on my father's side Shmul Benderskiy. It was taken in 1898 in Kishinev. My father's parents came from Kishinev, the capital of Moldova, which belonged to Russia before 1918. My grandfatherwas born in Kishinev in the 1850s. I have bright memories of my grandparents' house at the crossing of Podolskaya, Bolgarskaya and Dumbarskaya streets in the center of Kishinev. I was born and lived there for quite a long time. It was a big stone house with a big yard. There was a flower garden in front of the house. My grandfather loved gardening and growing flowers. There was an arbor with grapevine in the yard. There were bunches of grapes in the autumn. There was a round table and six chairs in the arbor. The family got together for tea on summer evenings. There were quite a few rooms and a big kitchen in the house. Two or three rooms were usually rented out. The family lived in the five other rooms. It was always cool in the house in the summer. There was old heavy furniture. Everything seemed huge to me: the big

chairs with high backs, the big sofas upholstered with velvet and the high wardrobes with many doors. There were pictures on the walls. They were portraits of my grandparents' family and religious pictures with biblical subjects. There were also photographs on the walls. My grandfather was fond of photography. I didn't like to be photographed. I was a vivid boy, and I hated to sit still for a minute or two. Everybody in the family was trying to avoid being photographed, so my grandfather took pictures of houses and landscapes instead. He had a small room that served as his photo lab. Part of the house was my grandfather's tobacco factory and tobacco store. My grandfather had another tobacco shop at the market. The factory 'Benderskiy and Sons' manufactured cigarettes and tobacco. My grandfather's agents purchased dry tobacco leaves from farmers. He had ten employees at the factory. The factory yielded good profit - people needed tobacco at all times.