

Lev Drobyazko's Mother's Father, Rabbi Nukhim Vaisblat.



My mother's father, Rabbi Nukhim Vaisblat. He was born in 1850 in the town of Malin. The photo was taken in 1890. Unfortunately, I know nothing about the history of the Vaisblat family prior to my grandfather, who died before I was born. But I know a lot about him. My grandfather, Nukhim Yankelevich Vaisblat, was born in the middle of the 19th century - between 1850 and 1860 - in the town of Malin, in the Kiev region. Malin was then a typical Jewish town. My grandfather received his first education in a Kheder of Malin, and later he completed studies in a school for rabbis, probably

in Kiev. At a young age he became the rabbi of the Malin Jewish community and was known for his knowledge and wit. During the 1880s, a so-called Eternal Jewish Calendar was widely circulated around the Malin, Berdichev, and Kiev Jewish communities. This calendar was calculated and compiled by my grandfather. The Berdichev printing house published it in 1887. Sometime during the 1890s, Nukhim Vaisblat and his family moved to Kiev, where, according to my mother, he served as chief rabbi of the so-called Soldiers' Synagogue, a position he retained until the end of his life. According to other sources, he was Chief Rabbi of the Merchants' Synagogue of Kiev. This was a very good career for someone who came from a small town like Malin. Nukhim Vaisblat held high status not only within the Kiev Jewish community, but also outside it. The family of the Vaisblats settled in Zhilyanskaya Street, an address famous for the fact that only Jewish merchants of the first class and high clergy were allowed to settle there because of the 'Jewish Pale' law. Rabbi Nukhim married while still living Malin. He chose to marry a poor girl who worked as a twister at the rag workshop of the Malin Paper Factory. It was hard work that did not pay well. As a result of this work, my grandmother contracted tuberculosis, from which she died many years later. My grandmother's name was Basya-Rakhuma Shloimovna; her maiden name was Lerman. She was born in Narodichi. They had eleven children. The Vaisblat family was very Orthodox, keeping every Jewish tradition, holiday, and kashrut. All eleven children received a primary Jewish education. Later, eight sons and one daughter - my mother - also received secular education. All eleven became famous and made contributions either to Jewish culture, or to secular science and culture. All the siblings had different destinies, but one thing they had in common - none of the rabbi's sons became a rabbi. Rabbi Nukhim paid for his children's higher secular education. (Since he wanted his Jewish children to attend a regular secondary school, he had to pay not only for their education, but also for the education of two poor Russian Orthodox students per each of his children). Nevertheless, Rabbi Nukhim never denied financial support to his children, and never forced them to choose any particular profession. But Jewish traditions were considered holy in that house.