

## Engelina Goldentracht's Grandfather Aron Stravets



My grandfather on my mother's side, Aron Stravets. The photo was taken in the town of Zolotonosha in the 1910s. Grandfather was on a business trip and sent this picture to his family in Ekaterinoslav. My grandparents, Aron and Matlia Stravets, lived in the town of Ekaterinoslav

[regional town of Dnepropetrovsk now] in the south of Ukraine. I have no information about where they were born. They must have been born around the 1860s. My grandfather may have come from Pinsk. My grandfather was a building contractor in Ekaterinoslav. He built houses. He had a construction crew. He developed construction designs and managed construction processes. He didn't have any professional education, but he was very skilled. He constructed several houses in the town. He didn't have his own house. His family lived in a four-bedroom apartment in one of the buildings that he had built in Philosophskaya Street in the center of town, near the synagogue. There was a living room, my grandparents' bedroom, a children's room and my grandfather's study in their apartment. In his study he had a desk, bookcases with books on construction, and a drawing board. My grandfather was a caring husband and father. At the beginning of the 20th century, when many Jews were leaving Russia in search of a better life, my grandfather also decided to move to America. He went alone to settle down and bring his family later, but he only reached Madrid. He became so homesick that he had to return home. My grandfather Aron wasn't religious. He didn't go to the synagogue. They celebrated Pesach at home - in respect of old traditions. They spoke Russian in the family, but they knew Yiddish very well. My grandfather believed that it was very important for the children to get an education. He spent all his savings paying for their education. All of them had teachers at home; they studied to read and write, French and German, manners and literature, and finished grammar school. They had many books at home: fiction, Russian and foreign books on philosophy and economy. They read books by Gertzen and Maxim Gorky. There were quite a few of Karl Marx's works in their collection of books. There were also other books about revolutionary movements and communist ideas. Those were read with great interest and discussed in the family.