

Larissa Khusid's Grandfather, Iosif Ortenberg, And Grandmother, Dora Ortenberg



My maternal grandparents, Iosif and Dora Ortenberg. The photo was taken in Odessa in 1916. My grandfather Iosif Ortenberg, was born in 1860. I don't know how he met my grandmother, but they married in Kishinev in 1880, and had seven children. Around 1905, their family moved to Odessa. My grandfather was a teacher. His students took classes at his home. He provided all of his children

with a good education. His daughters finished grammar school and his sons received further education. My grandfather was a man of advanced ideas for his time. The family was not religious. There was a legend in my grandfather's family, which my mother's brother, Abram, passed on to my husband and me as our wedding gift. He wrote in his congratulatory letter to us that he wished he could give us something more as a wedding present, but that because he was poor, the family legend was all that he had to give. The legend says that my great-grandfather, Pinhus Ortenberg, a teacher, was the first to bring an electric light bulb to Vinnitsa from Europe. This same man had a friend who lost his fortune in a card game. My great-grandfather covered his friend's card debt, thereby dragging his own family into poverty. The Tzaddik of Vinnitsa cursed my great-grandfather, saying that there would be no riches in his family, but sweetened the curse somewhat with the blessing that no one in the family would die a violent death. Both the Tzaddik's curse and his blessing held true for over one hundred years.