

Gisya Rubinchik's Father Evsei Lapis



This is my father Evsei Lapis. The picture was taken in Shklov in 1938 for some official documents. My father came from Shklov. He was born around 1885. I don't know anything about his education. When he was young, he worked with his father in a mill, which stood on the bank of a lake, above the Dnieper river. He served in the army from 1914 to 1918, participated in World War I, and then in the Civil War. He was a very strong person, strong-willed and brave. He didn't join any party and stayed away from politics. He was awarded a St. George Cross for his service at the front. It was a very rare award for Jews. Father returned from the war as an invalid: he lost a leg and one eye. He was treated in a hospital in Petrograd. My father got married soon after he returned from the front. So my mother married an invalid. She was only one year younger than my father. Mother and him loved each other very much and had known each other from childhood, because they were cousins. That means that my grandmothers were sisters. It was in Leningrad that I saw my father for the last time. He came to visit my brother Yuda, me, and his brothers, Abram and Honya. It was the first vacation in my father's whole life. For the first time he had a rest from his work, from his

household chores. Before he left, my father and I went on a ride in a tram. When the tram turned from Kuibyshev Street to the Revolution Square, I suddenly felt my heart stand still due to a bad presentiment. I felt as though I was seeing my father for the last time. I was almost choking from tears, something was squeezing my throat and chest. I could do nothing, and neither could I explain my condition to my father. That happened in the spring of 1941. There were only a few months left before the beginning of the Great Patriotic War .