

Kopel-Duvid Sukhenko



This is my father, Kopel-Duvid Sukhenko. His family differed from the rest of the Jews in Grigoriopol, a very small town on the Dnester River in Moldova. Four nationalities lived in the town - Armenians, Russians, Jews and Moldavians. The population was about 1,000. The Jewish population - about 100 families - worked in commerce and crafts. Our family toiled the land and did not live among the Jews. My father was born in 1870, the youngest of four brothers. My father was a farmer. We grew tobacco. We lived among the Armenians. In 1902, my father had gone to Argentina for five years to help develop agriculture there. My mother, Tsivye, was born in Chisinau; her father was a house-painter. My mother was illiterate, but she had talent. She used to mold glue into animal figures; they were very expressive. Of course, in that uneducated environment, nobody appreciated it properly. She bore 10 children; four died when they were very young. Every morning my father would wear tallith, white clothes and prayed. He regularly went to a synagogue. I remember well our family Seder. We arranged some chairs, covered them with pillows for my

father could recline on them. There were new plates and glasses on the table; we ate matzah and all sorts of things. Then we opened all doors, up to the entrance and father said a prayer and tried a glass. My parents were fond of singing: both of them had a good ear for music. My father had a deep voice, while mom had a tremble. Every Saturday they used to sing Jewish songs together; my older sister Tanya danced with a walking-stick. I still remember those melodies although then I was only 9 or 10 years old. This continued until 1920.