

Iosif Lazarevich Raitsykh



This is my grandfather on my mother's side, Iosif Lazarevich Raitsykh. Presumably the photo was taken at the end of the first decade of the 20th century in Baku.

Iosif Lazarevich Raitsykh, was born in 1885 in Astrakhan. It is a region on the Caspian Sea, near Baku. As a grandson of a Nikolai's soldier he was granted a delay from military service and many

other privileges, because a standard term of service in the imperial army was 25 years.

By the age of 22 Iosif finished the grammar school named after Alexander III in Baku. But it took him some effort to graduate, he encountered big problems there. Once he asked why he had received a mark lower than he actually deserved, and he was told that he was a bloody Yid. And he was ready to fight with the offender. He was expelled and had to go to Tiflis [today Tbilisi, Georgia], to some Georgian Duke, who supervised all the education in that region, to ask, to implore, and to submit an application on his reinstating in that grammar school. He had to pass many examinations as an external student, not attending lectures. Therefore his education was a little bit stretched out in time.

However, by 1907-08, all these problems were resolved. He had finished the grammar school, and he was even permitted to go abroad, where he was hoping to obtain university education. The Baku municipal council approved his departure, and the head of administration had signed the appropriate certificate in the Yiddish language, for which you were supposed to pay a tax of 75 kopecks back then.

In 1908, Iosif entered the University in Munich. He graduated from the medical faculty of that university, attended lectures in other universities besides Munich, in particular, the University in Halle and the Berlin University. Among other lectures, he attended those of Professor Virhoff, a well-known scientist in the medical circles. Iosif's thesis was typed and published in German, a language he knew perfectly, and his diploma was a very significant work. And in spite of the fact that he had received his education in a solid European university, Iosif returned from Munich to Petrograd, where he was assigned to carry out medical service in the hospital of Prince Oldenburgsky.