

Emil Potievskiy And His Friend



Here you can see my father, Emil Potievskiy (on the right), photographed at the time of his service in the Tsarist Army in 1914.

My father was born in 1893. He only studied in cheder. When his father and older brother were killed in America my father took responsibility for the family: Rachel was married and had to take care of her own family and Gedali didn't care about the family.

My father went to work at the age of 14 – he became an apprentice of a cabinetmaker.

My father served in the tsarist army and participated in World War I, he was a private, struggled against Bolsheviks somewhere in Russia. In 1917 he was slightly wounded and demobilized. He returned home in 1917. After the revolution of 1917 my father went to work at the furniture factory in Malin.

My father was a tall and handsome fair-haired man. When he was in his teens he fell in love with his cousin on his mother's side – my future mother. It was customary in the Jewish community for cousins to form a family and my parents got married in 1921. My parents had a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah in the synagogue. They had only a small wedding party – this was a hard period of revolution and civil war.

My father was a real atheist, even though he wasn't a member of the party. He found Jewish traditions and holidays funny, but he loved his wife and took part in our celebrations.