

Frida Khatset's Father Itshok Khatset



My father Itshok Khatset. My father was photographed on the occasion of entering Commercial school #1 in Kiev. My father gave me this photo in 1966. Signed on the backside: 'To my darling beloved daughter Fridochka. Papa. 3.02.1966'. Photo studio 'L. Kraevskiy in Kiev'. Kiev, 1899.

The name of my grandfather on my father's side was Evzer Khatset. I guess my grandfather Evzer was born in 1850s. I don't know where he was born. Perhaps, he came from Kiev. The thing is when we were young it was not a custom in our family to share the memories or ask questions about the past. My grandfather was a merchant of guild 2. He was a leather dealer. I remember how my grandfather looked: he wore a black yarmulka, had a small beard with streaks of gray and a moustache, and he was a slender man. My grandmother Haya Rukhlia Khatset - I don't know her maiden name - was born in 1860s. My grandmother and grandfather lived in the center of Kiev.

My grandmother and grandfather on my father's side were deeply religious: my grandfather had a Torah and there was a mezuzah over their door: a box with a scroll with a prayer written on it. My grandfather had a black and cream striped tallit and a leather tefillin: two small boxes with long leather straps to be worn on the forehead and hands. My grandfather strictly observed Jewish traditions and went to the synagogue as long as his condition allowed.

Before the revolution 1917 the Khatset family was wealthy: they could afford to take a vacation at the seashore in the Crimea or Caucasus.

My grandmother and grandfather had five children. My father Itshok Khatset, born in 1889, he studied at Commercial School in Kiev and finished it with a gold medal [highest award for graduates of secondary schools in the Tsarist Russia and after in former USSR] in 1906. To enter

the University he had to pass exams for a course of studies in grammar school. My mother told me that my father's dream was to become a doctor and he submitted documents to Medical Faculty, but was not admitted due to the 5% restriction for admission of Jews. He studied at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics for a year and then went to study at the Medical Faculty, but left it. He spent a lot of time studying philosophy and literature and he decided that he had to refuse from becoming a doctor since he would experience the feeling of guilt every time he fails to cure a patient and every fatality would be painful for him. My father went to study at the Law Faculty believing that he would be helping people after getting this profession. He was a very sociable, kind and educated man and very intelligent person.