

# Death Certificate Of My Grandfather Zalman Tseitlin



Death Certificate of my Grandfather Zalman Tseitlin, issued by Smolensk rabbi in 1909:

SMOLENSKIY

Public

RABBI

28th of December, 1909

fi 400

The town of SMOLENSK

Seal of Smolensk public rabbi

Doctor of philosophy

A.Yu. Fridman

CERTIFICATE

Issued by Smolensk public Rabbi office to be presented to Smolensk Province Department stating that the civil act is written in the parish register of the deceased Jews as of 1909, line fi 54 as follows:

"on the 21st of November 1909 Zalman Faibishev Tseitlin, born in Mstislav, Mogilev province, passed away from lung disease at the age of 48 and buried in Smolensk Jewish cemetery

Signed and stamped by.

Seal of Smolensk public rabbi

Doctor of philosophy

A.Yu. Fridman

My paternal grandfather Zalman Tseitlin and grandmother Sara-Kreina Tseitlin lived in an ancient Russian city Smolensk. Grandfather was from the Jewish town Mstislav. He was born in 1861. Mstislav is on the border of Belarus and Russia, not far from Smolensk. I do not know where

grandmother Sara-Kreina was born. I think she is from Smolensk. Unfortunately, I do not know her maiden name. Grandfather moved to Smolensk, when he was a grown-up. I still keep certificate of master of bakery belonging to my grandfather. In accordance with that certificate Mstislav dweller Zalman Faibishev Tseitlin was given rights and royalties of a guild master as per order of the Emperor. Grandfather was permitted to live in Smolensk not within the Jewish Pale of Settlement. Grandmother was a housewife and raised children.

I heard a family legend on the origin of the last name Tseitlin. When the empress Catherine II [Catherine the Great] was touring Russia, she came to the village of Smolensk province. A beautiful buxom Jewish girl brought bread and salt to the empress. The empress told her: "What a beauty! What's your name?". The girl replied that her name was Tseit. The empress said: "Well, I wish you as the say in Russian proverb 'be healthy as a cow and fecund as a sow'". The girl was some sort of relative of my grandfather. Then she gave birth to 24 sons. All of them carried name Tseitlin. But it was just a family legend. I do not know whether it is true. Grandfather had relatives in England, America and other countries. Unfortunately I do not know anything about them.

In 1890 my grandparents got married. Grandfather and his young wife left for England to seek fortune. They had lived in Manchester, England 4 years. Their first child, my father was born in Manchester in 1892. In accordance with the English law, the baby born in England acquires the citizenship of this country. So my father became British citizen. He was called English name Ellis.

In England grandfather was not a baker. He worked at the steam engine manufacturing plant as a mechanic. He liked the job very much as it gave him the opportunity to use his potential, but the climate was not OK with him. His health was poorer. The doctor said that he had some sort of lung disease and he was recommended to return to his motherland. Grandparents and their little son came back to Smolensk.

Grandfather bought a house in Smolensk and regained work. Grandparents had three more sons in Smolensk: Haim born in 1897, Aron, born in 1899 and the youngest Samuel in 1901. Children were raised as Jews. They went to cheder. They knew Ivrit and prayers. Jewish traditions were observed at home. Sabbath and Jewish holidays were marked at home. The family belonged to middle class. Grandfather wanted all children to get education, but he did not manage. In 1909 grandfather was stricken with pneumonia and died. He was buried on the Jewish cemetery in Smolensk.