

Josef Szojme Szwach



This is my father Josef Szojme Szwach. The photo was taken in Horodenka in the 1920s. My father was tall. He wore a peaked cap, and a gray hat with a brim on holidays. Father was slim - he'd worked very hard since the age of 14, so he was muscular and a very strong man. I think he was handsome. At home they used to tell us that my mom was supposed to go the States, and she got the affidavit [papers enabling emigration], but then she fell in love with my father and passed up the trip in favor of her sister Sara. They didn't get married by shidduch. Times had moved on by then. Perhaps they met in a club or something. Father made everything a carpenter could make: furniture, window frames, doors, coffins. He would sell it on Tuesdays at the market. The Ukrainian peasants would bring their produce to sell, and then they would wander round and buy tables, chests, chairs, benches or coffins. We helped Father. I remember that we used to walk to Ofenberger's wood yard, for instance, two kilometers or so away, and carry one or two planks back on our own backs. That way we saved on the price of the cart.