

Isroel Glezer



This is my father Isroel Glezer. This photo was taken for his Lithuanian passport in Birzai in the 1930s. My father was born in Birzai in 1891. The only education he got was at cheder. He had to start work and became a painter's apprentice, when he was still very young. Very soon my father surpassed his master and became the best expert in painting. He was highly skilled and did fine work, which required artistic skills. The climate in Lithuania is humid, the winters are cold and damp, and people tend to have all renovations done during the summer. To have work to do in winter, my father learned how to engrave on granite gravestones in the Jewish cemetery. When World War I began, my father was drafted into the army. In less than a year's time he was wounded and shell-shocked. He was taken to a hospital in Kiev. When he recovered, he was dismissed from

the army. When he returned home, his father Fayvel had already passed away, and my father took to work. He also helped my grandmother about the house. In 1919 my father married my mother. She also came from Birzai. My father knew her since they were young. My father sang very well. I think he might have made a good opera singer, had he grown up in different conditions. On Saturday he liked singing Jewish songs, and neighbors and friends enjoyed listening to him. In the summer, when the weather was nice, we went for walks in the park. Jewish families used to walk there, bowing 'hello' to one another.