

Pinkus Geftman



his is my maternal grandfather, Pinkus Geftman. The picture was taken in I.Gezelemes studio, Sevastopol, in 1875.

I do not know where my grandfather was born. Sevastopol was totally devastated after the Crimean war. There was a need in qualified people who were willing to work on the revival of the city. My young grandparents came to Sevastopol in the 1850s. Grandfather was clever and entrepreneurial. I know that they used to change apartments moving from poorer districts to the wealthier ones. Their financial position improved and their family grew. Finally they settled in a very beautiful and prestigious district of Sevastopol near the historic boulevard.

I do not know if my grandfather was educated, but he had a lot of gumption and was go-getting. I do not know what he was dealing with exactly. All I know is that he had something to do with construction. He came into money due to his hard work. He was known in Sevastopol for constructing there first steam mill, for the sake of which Grandfather became prosperous. Then he invested money into the construction of income-yielding houses. He built a lot in Sevastopol. Even now there is a house in the vicinity of the market, built at the cost of my grandfather.

He also built a nice big house for his son Grisha after he got married. Grandfather built a country house in Balaklava for his family. He wanted to restore a prayer house at the cemetery in Sevastopol. The building remained under construction. When my husband and I lived in Sevastopol after the war, we saw its shambles.

Grandfather started building a shrine for his family, but did not manage to finish it. He thought that he and his kin would be buried in that shrine. He did not want to leave Russia, but things did not turn out the way he expected since the revolution of 1917 was in his way. My wealthy and entrepreneurial grandfather could see through that he would not be able to normally live and work during the communist regime. That is why he quit everything and immigrated with his family.