Lasar Blekhshtein’s Paternal Grandmother And Grandfather

This photograph shows my paternal grandmother and grandfather. I guess that they are paternal, because here you can see the same small box attached to my grandfather’s vest you saw on the photo of my parents.

It is a small metal box with a magnifying lens. The lens magnified the photo hidden inside. I do not know whom the photo shows (Mom also could not tell me). There is a group of 7 persons (men

wear kippot, but not Jewish clothes). So the box is more than 150 years old (I keep it)!

I managed to know something about my ancestors thanks to one very distant relative. His hobby was genealogy and he was engaged in it all his life long. He publishes articles in Russia and in America. He traced his own family back 5 hundred years and at the same time he found interesting facts for me.

You know, Jews were authorized to live in large cities, includin capitals only since 1863; the privilege was given to college-bred people, very rich ones and handicraftsmen.

For the 1st time our surname was mentioned right then: it was spelled Blekshtein. One of those Blekshteins was a tinsmith, another one was engaged in veneering. Possibly one of them was my great-grandfather (or grandfather), but I cannot prove it.

My own information is connected with the photos I have in my album (the small album full of old photos came to me from my relatives). There are photos of my grandfather and grandmother, probably they were my father's parents (unfortunately I do not know exactly), and also photos of my Daddy and Mom.

I know that my grandfather from that photo worked somewhere on a railway; and Mom told me with pride that he had invented an original lantern. I guess his creative abilities came down to me, because I also appeared to become a modest inventor.

Mom never spoke about her ancestors, therefore I knew nothing about them, including all her relatives. Only from that enthusiast of family trees I got to know that I had got an aunt (Mom's sister) and her name was Tsilye!

I suppose that my both grandmothers were housewives. I also understand that my maternal grandfather's name was Solomon, because my Mom's name was Rebecca Solomonovna (in Russian Rebecca Shlemovna).

It seems to me that her maiden name was Kaplun, therefore my maternal grandfather was Solomon Kaplun and my paternal grandfather's name was Lasar Blekhshtein (I was named in honor of him as is customary among Jews).