

Peretz Moscovici



This is my maternal great-grandfather, Uncle Moscovici. The photo was taken after a portrait of his from the 19th century, probably in Moldavia. From what I heard in my family, I know that my [maternal] great-grandfather, Mos [Uncle] Peretz [Moscovici], who lived in the village of Dragomiresti, in the Neamt County, was a petty barkeeper who had four children and who married a widow with five children of her own. He dedicated his modest work to this whole pack of children, who had to be raised. All the peasants loved him and respected him. As a proof, here's one of my mother's stories. One night, two famous outlaws of the time knocked on his door. One was a tall, sturdy guy called Zdrelea, and the other was a short, thin character called Maruntelea. My great-grandfather was frightened, as he suspected who was at the door, but he opened anyway. The two

men asked for tobacco and brandy and he served them. Then, they wanted the bill, to which Uncle Peretz, who was terrified, replied that he wouldn't take money from them. But the outlaws told him: 'Uncle Peretz, we know you, we know you're a poor man and you sell on credit to all the peasants who don't have money to pay you, so they'll probably drive you to bankruptcy.' And they were right. For what else could my great-grandfather sell in that bar except for tobacco and brandy? Matches hadn't been invented yet, so he also had the steel, flint and wicks used to light the fire, and he had gas and large lumps of sugar, as granulated sugar hadn't been discovered yet. The peasants didn't need flour or fruit, since they already had them at home. So the great pub was more of a waste of time. And Uncle Peretz eventually left the village where he had been born and where he had raised his children, and went [with his family] to Piatra Neamt. There he earned his living teaching children to read and write in Hebrew. He died of old age. This is all I know about my great-grandfather.