

Eli Jacob Morowitz

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HISTORY

"They came through Ellis Island before settling in the Bronx."

What do you know about the paternal side of the family?

My grandfather's name was Menache Morowitz. He was born in Russia around the late 1800s. I know little about him, with the exception that he was a wood carver, and from a very young age he owned and ran a wood factory. I believe he married his wife, Rivka Temberg, in Zhitomir, Russia. At the time, there was widespread anti-Semitism and violent pogroms against Jews. My grandparents were likely restricted to the area called the Pale of Settlement. The townships were called *shtetls*.

Why did your grandparents come to America?

My grandfather decided to leave his home and business to avoid the Russian army, which conscripted Jews for periods of about twenty-five years and sent directly to the front. I know that Menache and Rivka arrived in New York around the turn of the century. They came through Ellis Island before settling in the Bronx, a slum on Prospect Avenue.