Though Israel Rubin made aliya to Be’er Sheva in 2005 with his wife, Blossom, he was actually born in Haifa and spent the first seven years of his life in Kiryat Haim. In this “dusty, isolated Jewish outpost” of eight families, he attended a one-room schoolhouse in an abandoned cowshed. Night music was “the howling of coyotes, jackals and an occasional wolf.” The pioneers were plagued with malaria and besieged by marauding bands, especially after dark, but forged valiantly on. Their situation took a turn for the worse during the Arab revolt of 1936.

On his father’s side, Rubin is part of a 2,000-year-old community of Crimean Jews or Krymchaks, who spoke Judeo-Crimean Tatar, a Turkish dialect originally written in Hebrew characters. In 1920 some 12,000 Krymchaks, mostly linked by family ties, left the Soviet Union to make aliya. In Haifa Rubin’s paternal grandfather changed the family name from Rabeinu to Rubin, to avoid discrimination from the Ashkenazi elite.

Rubin’s father, Eliyahu, met his wife, Rebecca, in Haifa when she rented a room in his family’s home. Rebecca was a concert pianist from Kishinev (in what is now Moldova), a graduate of the prestigious St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music who had been an active Zionist leader in Hashomer Hatza’ir. She was summarily expelled from her native land after a harsh active Zionist leader in Hashomer Hatza’ir. She was summarily expelled from her native land after a harshes union to make aliya. In Haifa Rubin’s paternal grandfather changed the family name from Rabeinu to Rubin, to avoid discrimination from the Ashkenazi elite.

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