



# Early Roots

Early Years  
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Much has been told and written about the famous city of Nikolayev, the Rebbe's birthplace and a bastion of Chabad Chassidim for generations.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Rebbe's family led the Jewish community as rabbonim for close to 100 years, beginning with the Rebbe's great-great-grandfather, Harav Avraham Dovid Lavut.

In recently discovered documents, the full story of Harav Lavut's appointment to the position was revealed and subsequently published by JEM in the new Hebrew edition of the book "Early Years" about the Rebbe's formative years.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, a law was passed in the Russian Empire compelling all appointed city rabbis to hold a certificate of ordination by one of the government recognized rabbinical seminaries, attesting to the individual's proficiency in various Jewish as well as secular subjects.

In the year 5614, the fledgling Jewish community of Nikolayev invited Harav Lavut to move from the nearby village of Romanovka to serve as their rav, even though he did not have the necessary government recognized certificate. As more secular business people moved into the community, an attempt was made to vote in a more modern rabbi, but Harav Lavut remained in his position for years to come. Later, a government recognized rabbi was officially appointed as the city's rabbi, while Harav Lavut was called the "assistant rabbi." But for all intents and purposes, Harav Lavut remained the acting rav and led the Jewish community until his passing in 5650.

Presented here is the original document recording the election of Harav Lavut by members of the business community in Nikolayev, dated 8 May, 1862 (20 Iyar 5622).

Each elector was given one black pin and one white pin to put inside the pot. A white pin meant a vote for Harav Lavut, a black pin meant a vote against.

"Number of white votes [for] Harav Lavut: 14

"Number of black votes: 0"

*Read the full story, including a series of documents pertaining to Harav Lavut's appointment as rav, and many more new and fascinating details about the Rebbe and his family in the newly published volume: "שנים ראשונות"—Early Years, now in Hebrew.*

1. See *A Cradle of Greatness, Nikolayev and its Chassidim*, Derher Nissan 5781.

1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Wheat 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Barley 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Oats 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Rye 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Corn 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Sorghum 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Millet 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Buckwheat 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Rice 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Wheat 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Barley 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Oats 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Rye 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Corn 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Sorghum 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Millet 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Buckwheat 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter  
Rice 1/2 bushel in summer 1/2 bushel in winter

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