

Gershen Fleishman, His Wife Mina And Elder Sister Hanna Katsizna



These are my mother's brother Gershen Fleishman, his wife Mina (to the left) and elder sister Hanna Katsizna. The picture was taken at annual party organized by Jewish community of Liepaja, 1937.

My mother's family lived in Dvinsk. Grandfather Avrom Fleishman and grandmother Malka, nee Ulman, both were born in Dvinsk. Grandfather came of a wealthy family, and grandmother Malka was from a large poor family, who lived from hand to mouth. Nevertheless, grandfather and grandmother met, when they were around 18-19, fell in love with each other and asked their parents to allow their marriage. Grandfather's parents probably were not very pleased with unequal marriage as at that time wealthy wanted to marry rich, not poor, but still grandparents got married and started their own family. Grandfather had the business of selling kosher meat. He had his own stores and a house. Grandmother was a housewife. They were very rich. The family was large. They had 8 children. At that time most Jewish families had a lot of children no matter if the parents were able to provide for all those children. Wives bore as many children as God sent. I know only the year when my mother was born. I can name her siblings beginning from the eldest one. The first child was Nohum. Then mother's sister my favorite aunt Mushl was born. She was called Musya in the family. My mother Ester was the third, she was born in 1892. Then mother's brother Gershen and sister Hanna were born. Then brother Nehemye, sister Mina and brother Girsh were born. The age difference between children was not big. They were born one after another.

Mother said that the elder children were educated at home. The tutor came and taught all of them at once, age difference of one or two years was not important. The teacher taught them rudiments of reading, writing and counting. The four younger beginning from Hanna went to lyceum and got good education. Everybody got Jewish education. Boys went to cheder, melamed came home to teach the girls. They were taught Jewish traditions, religion, how to read prayers in Ivrit. All family members were pious.

Hanna got married in 1919. Her husband's last name was Katsizna. I do not remember his first name. All of mother's relatives had traditional Jewish weddings, and grandfather looked into that. My mother and all her siblings did not have prearranged marriages, but love wedlock. The seven of them children had love wedlock and lived happily in their marriage till the end of their days. There were neither tiffs nor divorces in our big family.

Mother started her own business after getting married. Her two sisters Hanna and Mina became housewives when married, mother's elder sister Musya and mother were owners of kosher meat stores. Both of them were very clever, energetic and entrepreneurial women and they probably felt bored at home. In general, mother's family was involved in business of selling kosher meat. Apart from mother and Musya, all mother's brothers owned stores of kosher meat.