

Sholom Rondin's Father Shlomo-Girsh Rondin



My father Shlomo-Girsh Rondin wearing the first jacket he made by himself. This photo was taken in Gomel in 1917.

My father Sholom-Girsh Rondin had perished two months before I was born. My father was born in Gomel in 1900. At present Gomel is a regional town in Byelorussia, but in the end of XIX - beginning of XX centuries it was a provincial town within restricted residential area. There was Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and Jewish population in the town. Jews constituted over half of the population of the town - there were over 5000 Jewish families. Jews didn't live in their own neighborhood in the town. They mixed up with other nationalities. Having neighbors of other nationalities people were bound to learn to be patient and tolerant. Jews were mostly involved in trade and handicrafts. The family of my grandfather Mendel Rondin resided in a one-storied house in the center of Gomel.

My father Shlomo Rondin, born in 1900, was my grandmother's older son. He was very religious even as child. He was constantly praying. He finished a yeshyva and knew Talmud and other religious books. He was an older son and had to go to work to help his parents to raise younger children. Perhaps that was why he didn't become a rabbi. My father was also very talented in making clothes. He was an apprentice and very soon became a professional tailor. My father fell in love with a Jewish girl when he was very young. His darling was a Jewish girl Rachel Levenchuk. She was the same age as he.

My parents got married at the end of 1919. My parents had a beautiful Jewish wedding. There was a rabbi at their wedding paying honors to the handsome and intelligent bridegroom. My grandmother on my father's side liked her daughter-in-law and the newly weds settled down in my father's family. Their marriage took place during the Civil War when the Red army came to Gomel.

They incurred big losses and needed to recruit local men. They came to my grandparents' home and told my father to get ready to go to the army. He was 20, his wife was pregnant, he never held any weapon before, but he couldn't disobey, sine they might have shot him as a deserter. Shortly afterward my father perished in the town of Bragin (near Gomel) when he was 20. His comrade brought his belongings home at the beginning of 1920. Later my grandmother went to visit the common grave where he was buried. When my mother became a widow at 20 she stayed with her husband's parents.