

Samuel And Ita Serman With Their Sons Dovid And Shleime



These are my parents Samuel and Ita Serman. My eldest bother Dovid is sitting next to Mother with the shovel in his hands. Mother is holding the second son, Shleime. The picture was taken in Rakvere in 1901.

My parenys got married in 1897. Father was 25 and Mother was 19. Certainly, they had a traditional Jewish wedding as it could not be different at that time. All weddings in Rakvere were according to the Jewish rite.

After getting married, my parents moved to the house of Father's parents. When my elder brother Dovid was born in 1898 they rented an apartment. It was a rather large maisonette and Grandmother Tsive-Feiga moved in there with us. The second son, Shleime, was born in 1900. It was written Solomon in his documents, but at home my brothers and I were called only by our Jewish names. In 1901 Meishe - Moses in his documents - and his twin were born, but the twin-brother lived for only three weeks and died. The deceased infant was buried in the Jewish cemetery of Rakvere next to Grandfather. In 1903 Ekhonon was born and in 1906 my sister Agness came into the world. I do not know her Jewish name. She was called Agi at home.

I was born after a big gap, in 1918. My parents were not young any more and did not think that they would have any more children. I was named Itshok, but Isaac was written in my documents. The birthday of my mother and I are close: she was born on the 5th candle of Chanukkah and I was born the following day, after the 8th candle.

Our family was religious. My parents strictly observed all Jewish traditions. My father was the warden of the synagogue [gabbai] in Rakvere. Like any gabbai he was a member of the board of the Jewish community of Estonia. Father was a convinced Zionist. Only Yiddish was spoken at home. It is my mother tongue and I often speak Yiddish with my wife.