

Elhanon Rogovski



The photograph shows my father, Elhanon Rogovski as a young man. It was taken in 1919 in Tallinn.

My father always recalled his aunt, Beile Chapkovski, and her husband who took the place of his parents with gratitude. They were deeply religious people: often attended the synagogue, didn't work on Sabbath, and strictly ate only kosher food. They also celebrated Sabbath and all Jewish holidays according to the traditions of Judaism. The Chapkovski family spoke only Yiddish. Aunt

Beile could speak little Russian and Estonian. Her husband was a kind person, but his life ended tragically. There was a small square in front of the Tallinn Synagogue with several stalls which sold sweets, lemonade, and various trinkets. The Chapkovskis owned one of these stalls. One evening, just before closing time, two thieves entered the booth, killed Aunt Beile's husband with an axe, and took the little money he had. This happened in 1925. Prior to that, everything was fine. The Chapkovskis helped my father to acquire a good vocation. Upon finishing nine years at a Russian gymnasium he studied under Rokhlin, an excellent old Tallinn dental mechanic. After he finished his studies, my father was tested by a special examining board and received a document which enabled him to work as a dental mechanic. Later, he worked with several dentists who treated patients in their offices and passed their orders to my father. He completed the orders at home where he had a small lab.

When my father was still a schoolboy he went to visit his mother's relatives in St. Petersburg during his summer vacation. He had a lot of relatives in St. Petersburg, all of them members of the Pats family. While he was visiting a family of some of his distant relatives my father met a girl named Sofia Beilis. My father was 14 then and Sofia was just twelve. That's when they fell in love. Every year my father went to spend at least a week in St. Petersburg in order to see Sofia. The last time he visited was in the summer of 1917. At that time they finally agreed to marry when my father started working independently, but due to circumstances they had to wait a further six years.