

Gerasim Dembo And His Siblings



These are the children of my paternal grandparents, Isaac and Sara Dembo, nee Bugg.

From left to the right are: Gerasim, my father; his elder brother Aron and their younger sister Cecilia Dembo. Gerasim is eight in this photo, Aron is ten and Cecilia is four years old.

The children are fairly dressed up; their family was evidently a well-to-do one. The photo was taken in Riga in 1908 .

Grandfather Isaac and grandmother Sara got married in 1890s, they lived in Riga and had three children:

Aron, my father Gerasim - his Jewish name is Gerson - and Cecilia. Regardless of the fact that grandfather died early and grandmother was left alone, she tried to provide the children with education.

I believe, her well-to-do brothers supported her financially. All her children finished a classical gymnasium and obtained education abroad, in Europe.

The German - not Yiddish - language was the mother tongue of Grandmother Sara's family, because the German influence was very strong on the Latvian culture at that time, especially so in Riga, the capital of Latvia.

All members of the family spoke Latvian and German; grandmother Sara and Aunt Cecilia, who lived most of their lives in Latvia, spoke it perfectly; my father and Uncle Aron spoke it less well.

They all spoke Russian well, Cecilia spoke without any accent and her brothers had a slight accent. Grandmother Sara wasn't religious, as far as I remember, she was a secular woman.