

Beyle Leya And Girsh Kloz



My grandmother Beyle Leya and grandfather Girsh Kloz were photographed in their yard with their small wooden house in the background, in the center of Kaunas. This photo was taken in 1956. My maternal grandfather, Girsh Kloz, was born in the 1870s. He was also a cabman and dealt with horses since his young age. My grandfather often recalled how he met and fell in love with my grandmother. Her name was Beyle Leya, and her maiden name was Cooper. She lived in a common Jewish family in Panevezys. My grandfather went to Panevezys on business and stayed overnight at the Cooper's. Her parents did not quite like Girsh. They were likely to want their daughter to marry a wealthy and successful Jewish man, and didn't believe a plain cabman to be her match. Girsh decided to kidnap his fiancée. It was a severe winter. He harnessed his horse, put a sheepskin coat onto the wagon, went to Panevezys and kidnapped Beyle Leya. She wasn't opposed to this deal. Girsh and the girl rode back to Jonava, and her parents had nothing else to do, but recognize the fiancé and arrange a truly Jewish wedding. Beyle Leya's parents bought her a house where my grandmother and grandfather lived their life and raised their children. It was a two-story building, but it wasn't large. There were many children in the family, and there was sufficient room in the house for all of them. All children attended cheder and went to elementary school. This was all the education they got. They were helping their parents. The girls were helping their mother about the house, and the boys were helping their father with his horses. The girls grew up and became housewives, and the boys became common laborers. In 1963 my grandmother Beyle Leya died. Grandfather Girsh outlived her and my father, he turned one hundred years old and died in 1967.