

Liya Epshteyn And Her Mother Revekka Epshteyn



This is my mother Revekka Epshteyn, nee Levin, and I. I was one year old. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1931. My parents met at charity ball in Tallinn. Such charity balls were held annually. Father saw Mother and fell in love with her at first sight. Mother liked him, too. I do not know how their relationship went, but they got married in 1924 in Tallinn. My parents were wed under the

chuppah, in accordance with the Jewish rite. Probably we have Jewish traditions in our blood. After getting married, my mother moved to Tallinn from Narva. My parents rented an apartment on Suide Street. When I was born, our family moved to a four-room apartment in a two-story house on Kaupee Street in the center of Tallinn. Our family lived there until the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War. We left for evacuation from that house. I was born on 23rd February 1930. I was named Liya. I had a nanny in early childhood, who spoke German, therefore the first words spoken by me were in German. In general, our family spoke several languages. Since childhood Father spoke Yiddish and German. Father was proficient in German as he had studied in Germany for several years. My parents spoke only Yiddish with each other and my grandmothers. Mother preferred Russian to German as she grew up in Belarus, then in Narva, and the latter bordered on Russia. The majority of the population there spoke Russian. Thus, I spoke German with Father, and Russian with Mother. I played with Estonian children in the yard, so I quickly picked up Estonian. My parents were also fluent in Estonian. It was natural for us. One could not live in the country without knowing its language. When I grew up, my nanny left her job and I was taught by a governess.