

Samuel And Ita Serman With Their First-Born, Dovid Serman



These are my parents Samuel and Ita Serman with their first-born, my brother Dovid Serman. The picture was taken in Rakvere in 1899.

My father's family lived in Rakvere. Their first-born, my father, came into the world in 1872 in Rakvere. His Jewish name was Shmuel, and he was called Samuel in accordance with the documents. Three more children were born after Father. When Father was born Grandfather put the surname Sherman, not Sorkin. He did it on purpose, for Father to avoid being drafted into the tsarist army. Thus, Father became Sherman.

Grandfather died rather young. The eldest son had to take care of the family. He did not study much, just finished cheder and two or three years of compulsory school. Father was very inquisitive and witty. He was well-read and self-taught. He knew a lot of things. Father and his younger brother Biniumin learned tinsmith skills from grandfather.

My mother Ita was born in Vilnius in 1878. There were no Jewish schools for girls at that time, but my mother was educated. She was fluent in Ivrit and Yiddish, of course. She could read and write in both of those languages. She also knew Russian, German, Estonian and Polish. Mother studied on her own and read a lot.

There were few eligible brides in Rakvere and many guys went to the cities with large Jewish communities to look for wives. So, Father left for Vilnius in order to find a spouse. Mother was very gorgeous and when Father saw her he said that he would not leave without her. They 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.