

Edis Kogan



This is my mother Edis Kogan. The photo was taken in Odessa in 1914 after my brother's birth.

My mother was born in Rotmistrovka, Kiev province, in 1883. The wealthy family of Grutskiye took my mother to their house. She helped them with the housework. They treated my mother very well. She learned to read and write in Russian from their son Shulim and she also learned to sew from his mother. When my mother was 15 or 16, Hanna Itzkovich, the wife of her cousin Semyon, invited her to move to Odessa. Hanna was a seamstress. Seamstresses at that time made shirts and decorated women's underwear with lace. My mother learned all this from Aunt Hanna.

My mother became a very professional seamstress and made high quality shirts. She got a job offer from a well-known garment factory in Odessa owned by Ptashnikov. My mother's shirts were sent to an international exhibition in Paris in the 1900s where she was awarded a diploma. Next year the owner of the factory was planning to send my mother and her products to another exhibition in Paris. Ptashnikov's son was supposed to go with her to represent the company. My mother already knew my father at the time – since she was so pretty, her fiancé didn't allow her to take the trip to Paris and my mother didn't go.

My parents got married around 1905. I am sure that they had a traditional Jewish wedding since both of them came from religious families and were raised religiously. After their wedding my parents rented an apartment in the building where Hanna lived – we always had very warm relationships with her. When my father got married his relatives helped him to get a job of a clerk in a fabric store, since working in the printing house was hazardous because of the lead dust. My mother continued to work at the Ptashnikov factory.

In 1906 my parents moved to Ekaterininskaya Street, to a four-room apartment where they lived their further life, and I live here as well. In 1907 my mother gave birth to a boy. He was a very weak boy and had rachitis. I know that my mother tried all she could to cure him, but he died in 1912. My mother had a nervous breakdown and my father sent her to a recreation center in Puscha-Voditsa near Kiev to improve her nervous system. My mother gave birth to my older brother Haim at home with a midwife attending to her. He was born in 1914, and we all called him Munia.