

Kalmin Zak At The Jewish Wedding In A Village



This is Jewish wedding in a village. This is my husband, Kalmin Zak, among the guests. He is the 2nd to the left in the top row. His brother is to the right holding a violin (he played in the Jewish orchestra). The picture was made in Shalkenai in late 1930s.

In 1946 I met my future husband. We were introduced to each other by former inhabitant of Shakai, my father's pal. He took the guy in the restaurant where he was watching me. When we got acquainted, we felt warm feeling towards each other right away. On the first night my new acquaintance saw me off home, but being a decent girl I did not ask him in. We had stayed on the threshold for a long time. We went for a walk and told each other about ourselves. His name was Kalmin Zak. He was born in 1925 in Shakai, which is not far from Shaulai, Kalmin's father died from peritonitis long before the outbreak of war. He had a fit of appendicitis, and was not operated on time. His mother remained by herself with 12 children. Of course, I do not know their names. All I know that there were 11 sons and 1 daughter. All of them but Kalmin were shot in occupation. He managed to hide in the shed. He saw mother and his siblings taken outside. Later on Kalmin happened to be in ghetto, wherefrom he was sent in concentration camp in Germany. He was lucky to survive. When he came in USSR, he was sent in the remote area of Russian, where he was involved in construction. It was hard for him to get out of there, but still he managed to come back to his motherland, Lithuania, where nobody was waiting for him. Our fates were alike. I was also lonely. Kalmin and I started seeing each other. I was very strict, I did not let him kiss me or even touch my hand. We had several dates and Kalmin proposed to me and we got married shortly. He bought wedding rings and Leya made a dress for me, we I put on for marriage registration ceremony. I took my husband's name. Later on when I was getting a new passport, the lady who was issuing it, made a mistake and my last name as Jakiene, not Zakene. Thus my last name is Jakiene.

Both of us were raised Jewish and decided to get wed according to Jewish tradition. Kalmin and I were wed in chuppah in Kaunas synagogue. Before that I dipped in mikvah. In postwar times we were one of the few couples who were brave enough. Unfortunately, I have not save the certificate

issued by rabbi. We had a wedding party at home, where my sister Leya and her husband, some distant relative of my husband and a pal who introduced us, were present.

We were a family. Soon I got pregnant and my husband insisted that I should leave my work. I became a housewife since that time. My Kalmin was an ordinary worker. He worked for glazer's shop. In soviet times he made pretty good money. Kalmin was a very kind person. He always gave me his salary and never asked me to report to him. I was rather economical and we lived comfortably. We had not lived for long in my small room. Soon, my pals helped us get a small apartment in the old part of the city. Later on, in the 1970s, the house was demolished and we were given the apartment in the district where we are still living. We hung it together with my husband. In summer we rented a dacha either in Palanga or in Prenai. We also went to the resorts, e.g. to Druskenkai, where we had mineral water. We had never owned a dacha. Husband bought a car in the early 1960s and we went on vacation by car. We almost did not go to the theaters. I enjoyed reading. I read a lot of books of Russian classics, Jewish and European authors.