

David And Haia Sulimzohn



These are my parents, David and Haia Sulimzohn, in the garden of some relatives from Dorohoi, I don't remember whose. I couldn't say when the photograph was taken, my father seems to be around 40-45, it could be in the late 1930's. But I do know who took the photograph - it was Patainic Rabinovici, my mother's cousin from Paris, on one occasion when he visited us in Dorohoi.

My parents' marriage was an arranged marriage, as was the custom in those days. They didn't talk about their marriage, but they had both a civil and a religious ceremony.

We lived in Dorohoi. My mother was a housewife, and my father was a trader. We had a hosier's shop in Dorohoi that my father inherited from his father. The store was located in the house where we lived, in the old downtown area of Dorohoi. The street was called Grigore Ghica, opposite our house there was a cinema which no longer exists. The house was as old houses are, the rooms were placed like in a train carriage, without separate entrances, and it was very dark inside - we had the lamps burning during the day as well. We had two rooms and there was a small kitchen in the courtyard with a tiny adjoining room that we built. The store was in a larger room in front of the house - it was the only room that was spacious and well lit.

My mother was less of a zealot. She lit candles on Friday evening, but she wasn't that strict about the separation of meat and milk. The rule about having separate dishes for milk and meat is a very complicated business and, in addition, you must have a lot of dishes. She did have separate dishes for meat and milk, but she would mix them. As for washing the dishes, she washed them all together.

She didn't have a wig, nor did she cover her head. She attended the synagogue only during the autumn holidays, that was all. My grandmother attended the religious service every Saturday, but she didn't. My mother used to light 2 candles. Since my grandmother was more devout, she had 4 candlesticks and she lit a candle in each of them; my mother had 2 candlesticks and she would light two candles and recite the prayer. The candlesticks were placed on the table where we sat down to eat.

My father wasn't religious. He didn't go to the synagogue frequently, he too attended the religious service only during the autumn holidays, that was all. Also, he didn't recite the prayer before the Friday evening dinner. Business was slow, and they didn't always have wine for Saturday either, there was nothing with which to perform the ritual. My mother didn't bake knitted bread, we bought bread from the town.