

Ranana Malkhanova And Her Family



This is my family: my father Moses Kleinstein, my mother Ester Kleinstein, my brother Zeyev and I. This picture was taken in Vilkauskis in 1935. It's likely that my mother had known my father since adolescence. My father's family had also moved to Voronezh from Vilkauskis with the outbreak of World War I. They got married in 1923. I don't think it was a pre-arranged marriage, which was customary with Jews. My mother said that my father had been wooing her for a long time, but she was rather picky. Ester was very beautiful and popular with young men. Despite the fact that both

of them weren't religious, the wedding was in accordance with the Jewish traditions. My parents got married under a chuppah in a large synagogue in Vilkaviskis. After the wedding, the family moved to Grandfather Solomin's house. Half of his house was demised to my mother as dowry. In 1924 my brother was born. He was given an ancient Jewish name, Zeyev. My father knew Ivrit and he was fond of ancient names. Even the dog had an ancient Jewish name, Nadhon. When I was born on 6th November 1932, I was also given an ancient Jewish name, Ranana. I had a happy childhood in a rather rich house, with overwhelming love. I enjoyed spending time with my mother most of all. My mother was a true lady. She stopped teaching at the lyceum after getting married. Of course, she looked after the house, but she didn't do any manual work, just gave orders to the maids. Her way of life was the same as the other rich ladies. Ester regularly went to the milliner. She probably had the most fashionable dresses in the entire Vilkaviskis. She had a number of fur coats from expensive pelt, and beautiful jewelry. But there were no places to wear it in our tiny town. My mother spent most of her time having coffee and cakes with the ladies from her circle. Sometimes she took me for a walk. These were the happiest moments for me.