

Hermann Marjenburger



This is the only photo of my father that we have. We left all photos at home, when we evacuated. Mama put only few pictures in her bag. This happens to be one of them. My father Hermann Marjenburger was photographed shortly before he married my mother. He gave this photo to my mother and she kept it her whole life. This photo was taken in Viljandi in 1933.

My father's parents lived in Viljandi [about 130 km east of Tallinn], a small Estonian town. My grandfather Iosif Marjenburger, my grandmother Ella and their children were born in Viljandi. My grandfather was a tinsmith. He made buckets, pans, wash-tubs, buckets, etc. One a week he took his goods to a large market. His goods were in demand, and the family was well provided for. My grandmother took care of the children and housekeeping. The family had 13 children, which was many even at that time. I didn't know the older children, and in our family, they never talked about them. They might have left for America or Palestine, looking for a better life. My future father Hermann Marjenburger was born in 1914. After him his sisters Rebecca, Lina and Mary, his brothers Zalman and Leo and the youngest Bertha were born. It was difficult to support the family with so many children. My grandfather involved his sons in the tinsmith's business as soon as they grew old enough to be of help to him. My father and his brothers were tinsmiths. As for the daughters, they were helping their mother about the house. All of the children were smart, bright, hardworking and handy.

My father's mother tongue was Yiddish. The family spoke Yiddish, but they also spoke fluent Estonian. My father's parents were religious. As for their children, they were not so religious. They still observed Jewish traditions, but they only went to the synagogue on holidays. They did not spend so much time praying.

I don't know what kind of education my father, his brothers and sisters received. I guess they must have studied somewhere. Perhaps, in a Jewish school. They could read and write, all of them, and my father liked reading.

My mama didn't tell me any details about how she met my father, but what she did say was that they liked each other well from the very beginning. It didn't take long before my father proposed to my mother. My father's parents did not quite like the idea of this marriage. My father's family was rather wealthier than my mother's, and my grandfather Marjenburger did not think this was a proper arrangement from the family perspective. However, my father didn't listen to his parents. They got married in Tartu, and my father left Viljandi for Tartu. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. After the wedding my mother and father rented a 3-room apartment with stove heating in Peek. My father was a tinsmith and my mother was a housewife.

I was born in 1935. My father liked spending time with me. He liked playing with me. I loved my father dearly. I associated him with a holiday: walking, having ice-creams and playing games. Mama treated me more strictly than my father did. We were not quite wealthy, but we had sufficient food and clothes and everything we needed to live a decent life. My father pampered me. I had a sweet tooth, and my father brought me fresh cakes from the bakery round the corner every morning before going to work. I woke u in the morning, and there was a cake on my bedside board waiting for me. Each morning started from a little festivity. My father was a very kind and interesting person. He seemed to have attracted people. He had many friends and acquaintances.