

Pesia Marjenburger With Her Stepfather Harold Kuuzik, And Mother Hana Marjenburger



From left to right in this photo: my stepfather Harold Kuuzik, me, and my mother Hana Marjenburger. This photo was taken in a photo shop in Tallinn in 1949.

In 1947 Mama married Harold Kuuzik. She met him in our shared apartment. Harold was Estonian. He was single. He liked my mother at once. My mother liked him as well. Harold was kind to me. Harold asked me whether it was all right with me, if he married my mother. That they were asking my opinion was very flattering to me. Harold was born in 1915. He was much younger than my mother. My mother, though, always looked young for her age, and this age difference was not visible. I gave my consent. They registered their marriage in a registry office, and in the evening we had a quiet dinner, with Aunt Sonja and her family participating. Harold was a cabinet maker. Our neighbors used to say he was very handy and skilled. There were few things people could buy in stores then. Harold made furniture and never lacked clients. He earned well. My mother didn't have to go to work for 5 years after they got married. He provided for my mother and me well. The only bad thing about him was that he liked drinking. Well, actually, when he drank, he went to sleep and caused no problems. My mother and Harold had no children. One day Harold decided to build a more spacious home for us. There was an old shed in the backyard. It was abandoned, and Harold made a small two-room apartment of it. The photo of it and our family having dinner was even published in a youth newspaper.

My mother always observed Jewish traditions. We celebrated all Jewish holidays. Harold celebrated with us. My mother liked cooking Jewish food. On holidays she used to make gefilte fish, stuffed

goose neck, chicken broth, forshmak, tsimes. We celebrated holidays together with Aunt Sonja and her family. Sonja didn't like cooking, while my mother enjoyed it. On Purim she made lots of hamantashen pies.

I attended no school in the evacuation. My mother believed the war wasn't going to last long and then I would go back to an Estonian school. This was why I went to school in 1945, when I was about to turn 10. However, there were many overage children like me at that time. In the evacuation I almost forgot the Estonian language and mama sent me to a Russian school. I became a pioneer at school. I did all right at school. I wasn't a very active pioneer. I always preferred minding my own business. I wasn't quite sociable, when a child. I was my mama's girl. I never liked leaving mama.

My mother went to work at the Kommunar shoe factory. She worked at a belt conveyor for 28 years, and only after my daughter was born she agreed to quit her job.