

Yakov Furman With His Mother Anna Furman, Father Nuchim, And Sister Irina



This is our family my mother Anna Furman, father Nuchim, I and my sister Irina. The picture was made in 1920s in Siauliai.

My mother Anna Ragalina was born in Siauliai in 1890s. she got a good education for that time- she finished Russian lyceum. She was fluent in written and spoken Jewish, Russian and Lithuanian. She was very witty and grandpa decided to involve his favorite daughter in business. He even took her on business trips. During one of such trips in Moscow mother met my father.

My father Nuchim was born in Moscow in 1890s. Upon graduation from lyceum, he became a merchant and started helping father. My parents got married in Moscow in 1915. Though, both families- father's and mother's were rather modern, the wedding was Jewish. Parents were wed in chuppah in the central Moscow synagogue. In 1916 I, Yakov Furman, the first-born came into the world. Lithuanian ending "as" was added to my last name when parents moved to Lithuania. When the revolution was about to start my sagacious parents did not think twice and moved in Lithuanian town Siauliai, where mother was born.

Upon return from Russia, my parents started living in grandpa's big house. Grandpa opened a large leather store, where father also was involved in business. In spite of good money in the family and prosperity, father felt himself a stranger. He grew up in Russian capital, where Siauliai. He had to go to synagogue like everybody did, but he was a modern and democratic man in his heart. Our

house was breathing with Jewish culture. We had a posh celebration of all Jewish holidays at home. On those days my father, and later I obligatorily went to the synagogue.

I was the first child in the family. In 1919 a girl Irina was born and in 1921 my younger brother Dovid was born. The house, where we were living, was very large. It was one-storied mansion, where grandparents, our and Meyer's family were living. We had all conveniences in the house, which was very rare. We had a toilet and a bathroom in a separate corridor. The water was pumped from the well and it was distributed between bathroom and kitchen. We had an expensive, nice solid furniture. I remember carved cupboard and a wardrobe, nice beds with the tester, sofas, a huge table with velvet cloth, pictures and Chinese porcelain vases. There was a large garden, where I spent my childhood. There was an orchard with apple, pear trees.. In summer and spring mother cooked jams, I still remember that sweet aroma which was felt in every room. There was also a husbandry -chicken and geese. Housekeeper took care of all chores, but at times we hired people for harvesting.

I was enrolled in Hebrew lyceum at 8. My grandpa Mikhail crammed me for the lyceum. When I was about to enter it, I had already known the basics of. The teaching was in Ivrit. We studied all compulsory subjects - physics, chemistry, mathematics, German an English, Latin, in a word the whole course of lyceum, which was secular since its founder was a layman. We did not study Judaism, but we studied Jewish history. We marked Jewish holidays. There was a drama circle where we staged the plays of Jewish playwrights. I found no interest in that. I was dreaming about entering the history department at the university. We had to pay a tuition so here only children of well-off people studied here. Mother tried making me study music, but I was flatly against it. There was time when music teach came over to us, but I refused from playing gamut. French Madam Furshe came to teach me French.