

The Shevalovich Family



This is our family picture, taken in Kaunas in the 1930s. From left to right: my father Zalman Shevalovich, my mother Beila Shevalovich, my grandmother Chaya Shevalovich, Mother's sister Rosa Katzene and her husband, whose name I've forgot.

The only grandparent I knew was my paternal grandmother. She was born in Kaunas in the 1870s. She got married and took care of the children and household like all Jewish women. I don't know what my paternal grandfather Chaim did for a living. He was also born in the 1870s, but he died long before I was born, without even reaching the age of 50. During the Great Patriotic War Grandmother Chaya stayed in the occupation with my parents. She perished in the Kaunas ghetto.

My father was born in Kaunas in 1896. There was a tradition in the family of Grandfather Chaim to give children a Jewish education. My father went to cheder, then he finished a couple of grades of a Jewish school. Since his childhood he had been an apprentice of a tailor. I assume that Grandfather Chaim was also a tailor. My father was not just a tailor. He became a true designer. He was the best at making children's clothes. My parents got married in 1920. They didn't have a pre-arranged marriage, like most Jews at the time. They met in some company of friends and fell in love with each other. My parents were wed in accordance with all the Jewish traditions- under a chuppah. Their marriage certificate was issued by a rabbi.

I don't know anything about my maternal grandparents. They passed away long before I was born. The only thing I know is that my mother's maiden name was Michel. My mother had a sister. She was about five years younger than she. Her name was Rosa. She married a Jew called Katzenis. Rosa was a very beautiful, stately woman. She lived in Kaunas with her husband and two sons. Unfortunately, I don't remember the names of her husband and children. Rosa and her family also were prisoners of the Kaunas ghetto. Her husband died first. Rosa and her sons perished in 1943 during the liquidation of the ghetto.

My mother was born in Kaunas in 1898. She finished a couple of grades of school, and knew how to read and write. My mother was brought up with a love for reading. Both her and my father's parents, simple craftsmen, were more worried about daily bread and earnings.