

Rafael Genis With His Wife Constantia Genene

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This is me, Rafael Genis with my wife Constantia Genene, during our rest in Palanga in the 1980s. In 1953 I met my fate. At that time I was working in the road department and we were building the road Klaipeda-Kaunas. I was in the town of Linkuva rather often as we had a machinery site there. Once I was driving in a car and saw a girl walking along the road. She asked for a lift. Her house was about five kilometers from Linkuva. I gave her a lift and went to work. When I was driving back I saw her standing there again. The lady said that she worked as a maid in Linkuva. Then I saw her again, and even drove her home. This is how we met. I liked her instantly and I came to meet her parents. They liked me at once though they were Lithuanians and I was a Jew. They didn't even think of my nationality. I took the young lady to Telsiai and we had our marriage registered. We have been together since then. My wife is Lithuanian. Her name is Constantia, maiden name Beryute. She was born in 1932 in Linkuva. She came from a simple farmers' family. They worked hard for a living. Constantia was an only child. She only finished elementary school before the war, then there were no opportunities for studies. She found a low profile job to help out her parents. In 1953 we had our marriage registered in Telsiai and started our life in a poky apartment. It was always neat and cozy. At times in the morning when the breakfast was being cooked in the kitchen, I woke up and thought that there hadn't been a war and soon my mother would come in and wake me up. It was the first time over those 13 years when I didn't feel lonely and it was a wonderful feeling to know that you were needed. We had a good life. There was an air of trust and understanding. There were no conflicts. On the weekend our friends came for a cup of tea. We talked about life. We celebrated mostly birthdays and the New Year. During the Soviet time there were no religious traditions in our life.