

Jacob Shkop



This is my father Jacob Shkop. The picture was taken in Tartu in 1922. Written on the photo in his handwriting is: 'I. Skop' The picture was taken in the photo studio Visit Portrait. During World War I, Father was drafted into the army, and he was in the lines for four years. He was contused, when he was in Manchuria. Father had serious heart trouble when he came back to Tartu after war. He had a great workshop in Tartu and was a famous tailor there. Mother was a housewife at that time and

took care of children. When she got pregnant again, Father was sure that he would have a son. He was agog to see a son, but I was born in 1920. I was named after my maternal grandmother Sima. I do not know whether Father was disappointed that I was born, instead of a long-awaited son, but still he loved me very much and I loved him too. In spite of being busy, he paid attention to his children. Yiddish was spoken at home, so I have known my mother tongue since childhood. Estonian was my other mother tongue, as my sisters and I played with Estonian children, who were living in our yard. It was natural for us to speak Estonian. Father was also fluent in Polish and Russian. His favorite writer was the Czech comedian writer Yaroslav Gashek. At home we had his book about a brave student Sweik. The book was in Yiddish and Father liked reading it to us. Father had a nice tenor voice. There was a Jewish drama theater in Tartu. There were no professional actors there, only talented amateur actors. The operetta 'Silva' was staged in the theater. I remember Mom and Dad often read in duet. Father had another hobby - chess. There were some nooks in the theater where people could play chess. I remember Father took me to the café, where he bought me ice-cream and I was watching how he played chess. Father was good at chess and I also started understanding the game. In fact, Father liked taking me anywhere he could. When the first movie theaters opened up, he took me there. Father loved reading and plied me with that since childhood. We had a very good library at home and Father also took me to the Jewish library in Tartu. We enjoyed getting together in the evening and read. Then we discussed the books and shared our opinion. My parents were very sociable. Father had many friends. His best pals were those who were in the lines with him. My parents often went for a visit and we also received guests in our house. We kept the door open for people.