

Moses Kleinstein



This is my father, Moses Kleinstein. This picture was taken in Vilkauskis in the 1930s. My father was born in Vilkauskis in 1901. I don't know if he went to a cheder. He didn't tell me anything about it. I think that my father got a traditional Jewish education. When his family returned to Vilkauskis, he decided to go on with his education, having finished the Voronezh lyceum. He entered the Lithuanian State Teachers' Training Seminary, which was located in Marijampole, 28 kilometers from Vilkauskis. He was admitted without any problem, as at that time Jews were loyally treated in Lithuania. My father did very well, making the teachers happy with his diligence and thirst for knowledge. I don't know where my father taught after having graduated from the seminary, as he specialized as a Lithuanian teacher. By the time of getting married he was the

director of an eight-year Jewish school in Vilkaviskis. In the period 1935-36 a new Jewish school was built in Vilkaviskis and my father got a spacious apartment from the school, as he was the headmaster. This apartment was even better than the previous one. There were five rooms, instead of four. Now my brother and I had separate bedrooms. Secondly, there was a sewage system and central heating in the house. There was also a large beautiful bathroom and toilet. In this house there were maids as well who took care of us and the house. Our apartment was on the school premises. I liked looking at the schoolchildren. I envied their school uniforms and bags, which they carried with pride. I started running into the classroom to take a seat at the desk and listen to the teachers. My father couldn't punish me. He never raised his voice at me.