

Mikhail Ferdmann With His Wife Sifa



This is father's brother Mikhail Ferdmann with his wife Sifa. The picture was taken in Tallinn in the 1960s.

My father and his brothers achieved everything themselves. They learned the tannery craft. The elder children started working and helped Grandmother with money. Then, they taught the younger ones their craft. All of them were shoemakers, not cobblers, but shoe-designers. This job required certain skills and was well paid.

Michael met his future wife in evacuation in Kirillovo. Sifa was also an evacuee. Her family were Belarusian fugitives. They turned out to be in Irbit. Sifa was a Jew and Grandmother allowed Mikhail to marry her. He was the only one of the family who did not have a traditional Jewish wedding. Where would they have found a rabbi in that hick Ural village. Their marriage was registered in the village council and in the evening Grandmother made a festive dinner for both families.

Soviet troops, including the Estonian corps, liberated Estonia on 24th November 1944. We returned in summer 1945. We started living together again in a small log house on the outskirts of Tallinn. There was one big room there, where all of us lived. We slept on the floor. Soon got two rooms in a communal apartment on one of Tallinn's central streets, Tartu Mente. All my father's relatives got apartments with time. All of them lived not far from each other and still were very close.

Mikhail and his wife Sifa got one room in a communal apartment. Mikhail worked as an accountant. They had no children. They lived together childless. Mikhail died in 1972. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Tallinn.