

Iosef Elenevich With His Wife And Daughters



This photograph was taken in a photo studio in Berlin in 1929.

I can't remember exactly what was the reason for us to go there, probably there was no special reason. This photograph is the only one showing my parents: Iosef Abramovich and Berta Lvovna Elenevich, as well as my sister Margotte and me.

My father was born on 7th June 1888 in Irkutsk. Daddy finished cheder, and then studied in Germany in an educational institution for specialists in weaving, where he became a good expert in textile fabrics.

My mother Berta Lvovna – according to her documents her name was Bredle Abramovna, and she had no idea where that name came from, because her father was called Lev – Kesselman was born on 17th March 1888 in Lvov. Mom studied only in an elementary school. Their mother tongue was Yiddish. But they also spoke Polish, German and Russian.

My mom left home in 1905. She had a bad-tempered stepmother; all my grandfather's children of the first bed left home. My Mom went to Berlin. At first she got a job as a cook in a Jewish restaurant, later she became a head-cook there. In Berlin she met my Daddy.

They got married in 1922. Of course, having become a married woman, my Mom immediately gave up her work.

I don't know their love story in detail; I only remember that according to them, they were especially introduced to each other by someone. Of course they got married in a synagogue under a chuppah, according to all the rules.

After their marriage in the synagogue they forgot to get registered in the state institution, it caused problems when I was already born. Several weeks after my birth I had my mother's family name, Kesselman. Then they got registered and I was given my father's surname.

Our family was of moderate means. My parents had three children, and always only Father worked. Everyone was satisfied with food, provided with shoes and clothes; the children studied. But we never lived in luxury.

After we moved to the USSR, the level of our well-being didn't change: we remained on the average level. But unfortunately the average level in the USSR was – and unfortunately is – much lower than that in Germany.