

Hava Hazan And Moshe Hazan



These are my maternal grandmother Hava Hazan and grandfather Moshe Hazan. My aunt Dora Hazan from Moscow had this photo. She gave it to my father. This photo was taken in the E. Rang Viljandis studio in Rakvere in 1910.

My grandfather was short and had red hair. I know that my grandfather lived in a small town. Somehow I remember that it must have been in Ukraine. His parents sent him for training with a Jewish hat maker called Birbauer. The training course lasted two years and after finishing it my grandfather became this hat maker's apprentice. He stayed with his trainer's family. He was also provided meals, but wasn't paid for his work. The hat maker had no extra money to pay my grandfather. Birbauer had a wife and eight daughters. His was a big family. One day my grandfather lost his temper and informed his master of his strong intention to leave him for not being paid for his work, but he also demanded that his master paid him whatever he owed. The master said he still had no money to pay him, but that he could give him one of his daughters to marry. My grandfather chose the youngest, Hava, who had gray eyes. She must have not turned 16 at that time. I only knew my grandmother's older sister Ida of my grandmother's family. She lived in Riga making men's clothes. Ida was single.

My maternal grandparents had a traditional Jewish wedding. After the wedding they moved to Riga. My grandfather earned his living by making hats, while my grandmother gave birth to their children. She had ten, but five died in infancy. In the early 20th century, the family left Riga for Viljandi, a small beautiful town in Estonia. A long time ago Viljandi was called 'little Switzerland' because of the hills, woods and a beautiful hanging bridge.

Everybody in my mother's family spoke Yiddish. I don't think my grandparents were very religious, but they observed Jewish traditions, went to the synagogue and celebrated Jewish holidays at home. They also raised their children Jewish.

My grandfather was the breadwinner, and the family was big. My mother told me that they were very poor. To have something for the family to eat in winter, my grandmother cooked red bilberries. She couldn't afford to buy sugar to make bilberry jam, so she just cooked it plain. In winter they spread it on bread.