Isaac Serman

This is me at the age of four. The picture was taken in Rakvere in 1922.

After getting married, my parents moved to the house of Father's parents. When my elder brother Dovid was born in 1898 they rented an apartment. It was a rather large maisonette and Grandmother Tsive-Feiga moved in there with us. The second son, Shleime, was born in 1900. It was written Solomon in his documents, but at home my brothers and I were called only by our Jewish names. In 1901 Meishe - Moses in his documents - and his twin were born, but the twin-brother lived for only three weeks and died. The deceased infant was buried in the Jewish cemetery of Rakvere next to Grandfather. In 1903 Ekhonon was born and in 1906 my sister Agness came into the world. I do not know her Jewish name. She was called Agi at home.

I was born after a big gap, in 1918. My parents were not young any more and did not think that they would have any more children. I was named Itshok, but Isaac was written in my documents. The birthday of my mother and I are close: she was born on the 5th candle of Chanukkah and I was born the following day, after the 8th candle.

Our family was religious. My parents strictly observed all Jewish traditions. My father was the warden of the synagogue [gabbai] in Rakvere. Like any gabbai he was a member of the board of the Jewish community of Estonia. Father was a convinced Zionist. Only Yiddish was spoken at home. It is my mother tongue and I often speak Yiddish with my wife.

Only kosher food was cooked at home. Mother had separate dishes for meat and milk. There was a shochet in Rakvere. He butchered cattle in accordance with the kashrut. There was a store where

meat was brought from the abattoir with a special Jewish department, where only kosher meat was sold. Mother never laid the table with meat and milk dishes. Even now there are families where milk and meat dishes are served at the same time, but I do not mix those products. I have been used to it since childhood and I do not want to give up that tradition.