

Naftole-Hertz And Evgeniya Shein



These are my parents, Naftole-Hertz Shein and Evgeniya Shein. The picture was taken shortly after wedding, in Valga in 1930.

I never asked my parents how they met each other. All I know is that all father's siblings had pre-arranged marriages. I think my parents also had a pre-arranged marriage. They got married on 2nd February 1930. I don't know where their wedding took place.

Mother left Riga for the small town of Valga. My paternal grandfather gave them a house as a birthday present. It was located on the same street, where my grandparents' house was. I spent my childhood in that house. Of course, the mode of life in a small town was different. There were patriarchal rules in the family, according to which the parents were revered. Mother had to call on her mother-in-law just to greet her and ask how she felt. Father was the bread-winner. He worked very hard to maintain the family. Mother was a housewife and practiced playing the piano.

I was born on 17th August 1932. I was named Irene. I barely saw Father in my childhood. He left early in the morning and came back late at night, when I was sleeping. He didn't have a car. He took the horse cart. Village roads were earthed roads and after rain they turned into bog. It was hard to ride on those roads. Father came home worn out. I remember there was a gadget to take off our boots. Rarely did Father have a day off and if so he was just lying on the couch almost all day long, trying to recoup.