Sholom-Iosif Shein With His Family



This is the family of my paternal grandfather. From left to right sitting: my grandmother Khaya-Leya Shein (nee Teiman), my grandfather Sholom-Iosif Shein. Grandfather's siblings, his brother Hari-Moishe Shein and his sister Tsviya Shein, are standing. The photograph was taken in Parnu in the 1880s.

I know about my father’s family from my grandfather Sholom-Iosif Shein, who was born on 10th May 1866 in the Estonian town of Parnu, which belonged to the Russian empire at that time. I know that my grandfather had a brother named Hari-Moishe and a sister, Tsvirl. Unfortunately there is hardly anything I know about that family.

My paternal grandmother, Khaya-Leya Shein, nee Teiman, was born on 15th October 1873 in the town of Panevezhis, Lithuania. My great-grandfather’s name was David Teiman. That is all I know about him. My grandparents got married on 2nd September 1892 and their marriage was registered by the rabbi of the town of Parnu. They apparently left the town as all their children were born in the Estonian town of Valga, on the border with Latvia.

There were six sons and three daughters. The eldest child, Rohe-Gitl, was born in 1893. She was called by the Russian name of Rosa. My father’s elder brother was called Efroim, and he was born in 1896. He was named after Great-grandfather. My father was born in 1898, shortly after his grandfather Naftole-Hertz Efroim Shein died. So Father was named Naftole-Hertz. In 1900 Ester was born and Ella followed in 1902. The next son, Leib, was born in 1903 and Abram in 1904. Then came Isroel in 1906 and the youngest, Pesach, was born in 1911.

When grandfather Sholom-Iosif got married, he made a living on cattle breeding. Then he was involved in timbering. The elder sons, Efroim, my father and Leib did not get secular education, they went only to cheder. They were elder sons and had to work to help their father. They were hard-working. Our family was rather well-heeled, but it was gained by hard labor. The daughters and younger sons got both Jewish and secular education. Though father did not manage to go to lyceum, he knew how to count well, was knowledgeable about timber, graders of wood, measuring timber. He was well up in everything related to work.

The family was very religious. There was a synagogue and a prayer house in Valga. The prayer house was at my grandfather’s place. The kashrut was observed at home. The family followed Jewish traditions. All members of the family went to the synagogue on Sabbath and on Jewish holidays. Yiddish was spoken at home. Everybody spoke good German and Estonian.