

Gerta Halperin And Family



This is a photo of my mother, Gerta Halperin, nee Gerson (second from left) and her family, taken in Tukum in 1903: My maternal great-grandmother, Jossel Hirshev Kramer (1843-?) (third from left) and great-grandfather Rosa Mendel Kramer (1855-1930s) (fifth from left) had thirteen children, whom you can see here. They come from Tukum, Kurlandia. They were engaged in grain wholesale as well as brewing. My mum's father, Leibe Gerson, a Tukum native, died in an epidemic in 1919 and my grandmother Rebecca Gerson, nee Kramer (fifth from the left in second row) remained behind with eight children. My mother was the eldest. She was born in Tukum in 1899, studied in a German school and spoke good Latvian. In 1915, when Jews were evicted from Kurlandia, she found herself in Yaroslavl, Russia, and finished a Russian grammar school. It's interesting that she didn't know a single word of Russian before that. She was so good in Russian that during the war she worked as a typist in the town of Semipalatinsk, and after the war she was a typist at the Ministry of Dairy and Meat Industries. In the employment records she was filed as an economist in order to authorize the managers to pay her more because she was an expert typist. My mother's recollections of Yaroslavl were very warm. After living in Tukum, Yaroslavl seemed to be a capital to her. She often recalled Volkovsky theater and public performances by the poet Igor Severyanin, whom my mother was chasing barefoot in winter.