

Etta Ferdmann And Her Family



This is the first husband of father's sister Zelda, Sinder, with my father's brother Samuel Ferdmann and his wife Mira. The first to the right is father's brother Mikhail Ferdmann. I do not know the other two men in this picture. They were probably some pals. I am standing in the front. The picture was taken in Narva in 1937 during a walk.

My paternal grandparents had five children. The eldest, Benchi, was born in 1896. In 1901 their daughter Zelda was born and in 1902 their son Samuel followed. In 1904 their son Meishe was born. He was always called Mikhail. The youngest was my father Gessel. He was born in 1907.

I did not know Grandfather Chaim Mendle. He died in 1909, when my father was only two years old. Grandmother became a widow with five children. Probably she never got married again because of the children. Who would like to marry a widow with such a caboodle of children? Grandmother

managed to raise the children by herself. She was a common, uneducated woman. While Grandmother was alive, she was a housewife. After her husband's death, my grandmother found a job, started rolling cigarettes. Of course, she could not make a lot of money with such work, but still she managed to raise her children.

I do not think any of them finished secondary school. At that time education was expensive. All of them just went to a Jewish school. My father finished seven grades of a Jewish school, maybe even less. He read a lot, was interested in many things. He looked like a mundane, educated man.

Grandmother's four sons achieved everything themselves. They learned the tannery craft. The elder children started working and helped Grandmother with money. Then, they taught the younger ones their craft. All of them were shoemakers, not cobblers, but shoe-designers. This job required certain skills and was well paid.

Father's sister Zelda married a Jew from Narva called Sinder. Their daughter Gita was born in 1932. Father's brother Samuel married a Jewish girl from Riga. Her name was Mira. In 1937 their son Chaim Mendle was born. He was named after Grandfather. His secular name was Charvie. He was a wonderful boy. I was born in 1934 and named Etta after Grandmother.