

Polina And Yakov Kljass



These are my parents Polina Kljass, nee Shreiber, and Yakov Kljass. The picture was taken shortly after their wedding in Tartu in 1915.

My parents got married in 1915. They lived in Tartu. They did not have their own place to live, they rented an apartment. The apartments were always very beautiful. Father dealt with timbering. He had a wholesale warehouse of timber materials: boards, roof timbers etc. In a word, all kinds of timbering materials used in construction could be purchased at my father's warehouse. After getting married, my Mother became a housewife. In 1917 my elder brother David was born, and I was born in 1919. I was called Ester. Only German was spoken at home, and brother and I learned how to speak German. It was our first language.

I had a very happy childhood. The house in which my parents rented an apartment during my childhood was located in a wonderful, large garden. Father loved roses and cultivated them himself. We had a horse and two dogs – the bigger one, the watch dog lived in the yard, and the small one in the apartment.

We stuck to Jewish traditions at home, but did not observe them strictly. We marked Jewish holidays at home. Father went to the synagogue on holidays. I remember on Pesach my father carried out the seder and afterward we sang Pascal songs. I also remember Rosh Hashanah. We always marked it ceremoniously. We did not observe the kashrut. We did not cook dishes from pork, but my father liked ham a lot and it was bought for him.