

Raya Teytelbaumene With Her Husband Fayvel Teytelbaum



These are my husband Fayvel Teytelbaum and I, Raya Teytelbaumene, walking along the streets in Vilkaviskis in 1936. My brother Boruch took our picture. He bumped into us in the street.

Fayvel Teytelbaum was born in 1909 somewhere in Russia – I can't recall where exactly – and moved to Vilkaviskis with his mother, when he was a child. Fayvel's father had died a long time ago, and his mother Riva had a small house, where she lived with her son. Fayvel was the breadwinner of the family. He worked at the soap making factory, owned by some Jews. Fayvel was a very gifted and honest guy. He was respected and valued by the owners. Fayvel made pretty good money. He asked me out to eat ice-cream. We often strolled hand-in-hand. These were the happiest years of my life. However, my parents didn't approve of my infatuation and were against Fayvel as he was much older than me. I was in love, and my parents understood that there was nothing they could do to separate us.

I understood that I would be married soon in spite of my parents' will. I thought that learning some profession would be more important than finishing the lyceum. I left for Kaunas, where I entered the Jewish professional seamstress school and started learning that profession. I rented a room with several girls on Maku Street. I made new friends here as well. They were keen on Communist ideas and all of them were underground Komsomol members. I also gave in and the ideas of equality and fraternity were close to me. I also entered the Komsomol. However, I was a poor member. I didn't fulfill the assignments, as I was much more interested in my private life. Fayvel didn't leave me in peace. He came to see me very often. We became close and my chosen one insisted that we should get married. My parents couldn't help agreeing to that. In 1936 Fayvel and I went to Kaunas. Our marriage was registered by a town rabbi. There we went under a chuppah in the synagogue. We celebrated our wedding at home. It was very modest: a dinner for the relatives arranged by my mother.

My parents gave us their large bedroom. They changed their attitude to Fayvel. They saw that my husband loved and took care of me, he literally worshipped me. They also loved him. We had lived in Vilkaviskis for a couple of months. I decided to continue my education, and Fayvel and I left for Kaunas. I recommenced studies at school, worked in the school workshop and got a scholarship. Fayvel found a job at a comparable factory to the one where he had worked in Vilkaviskis -the one that produced soap. We rented a room on Kestucchio Street. The three of us lived there - my husband and I and my brother Chaim, who was studying at Kaunas University.

I was happy. I loved my husband and he adored me. We never parted. I loved Kaunas, we went for walks in the city, and to the cinema, which was a new attraction to me. My husband bought me presents that he could afford. He tried to get fashionable clothes for me. On holidays, we went to see my parents in my hometown. Our room with clean linen was always ready for us as well as a tasty dinner.