

Herzl Chanion



This is my father Herzl Chanion. The picture was taken in Wilno in the 1910s.

My father was a true expert. He had a huge, huge workshop. After all, he had to earn enough to keep such a big family. He was a men's tailor. He had very good employees and he was a master tailor. Father's firm was in the house opposite our apartment. About 20 people worked there. It has to be said, though, that it wasn't a tailor's for everyone - the people who came to my father were the very, very best people. Father made gala dress for generals, army officers, and for the rich and wealthy. He had a lot of regular customers, not just from Wilno. A few very rich people came to his shop every year from Warsaw.

My father was blond. All my brothers and sisters and I inherited his light hair and fair complexion. And for that reason nobody believed that we were Jewish. My father had a beautifully groomed moustache. He was very elegant. He could not but be elegant - he was one of the best tailors. Indeed, to this day my friends say of me: 'Ah yes, she is her father's daughter,' because I like to dress very smartly, too.

I don't even know how my parents met. If I'd been an only child I'm sure I would have asked about all things like that. But there were so many of us that there wasn't even time to ask. All I know is that my father was a very handsome man and Mama a very smart woman. I'm sure they met somewhere and fell in love. When they got married Mama was 17 and Father 18.