

Anatoli Kraemer With His Mother Paulina, Grandmother Vera Pasternak And Their Friends



The picture was taken at the resort Narva Joesuu, on the bank of the Narva river. First row, from left to right: I, my mother Paulina, my stepfather Mark Schynzvit, grandmother Vera Pasternak. I do not remember the rest. We took a picture with the people we met at the resort. The photo was taken in 1938.

In summer our family went on vacation to Narva Joesuu, a very popular recreation place. There were all kinds of amusements for the tourists. Every year there was the Narva Joesuu beauty contest called 'The Queen of Narva Joesuu.' My aunt Ester was chosen the beauty queen.

In 1937 my mother married a German Jew called Mark Schynzvit. They had known each other for several years before getting married. Once my mother went on a trip to Germany and France. At that time the fascists were already at power in Germany, but tourists were still safe there. Mother met Mark during one of the excursions in Germany. He was a widower, six years older than my mother. Mark had his own company. They liked each other and wrote to each other for a while after she returned to Estonia.

At that time they did not think about whether Mark would move to Estonia or Mother would go to Germany. Then it became clear, Jews would not be safe with the fascists being at power in Germany, so Mark moved to Tartu. By that time the fascists had seized his enterprise, he only managed to take some money with him. At least he could feel safer here.

Mother and Mark got married in Tartu. They had a traditional Jewish wedding, but a rather modest one. Mark could not get Estonian citizenship immediately, but the Estonian government gave him temporary passport, issued for fugitives. He could not be in the government, but other than that he had equal rights with Estonian citizens. With time that passport was changed to an Estonian passport.