

Samuel Kraemer



This is my father Samuel Kraemer. After their divorce, my mother did not keep my father's pictures. This was the only one that was saved. The photograph was taken in Tartu in the 1920s.

I cannot tell you much about my father. All I know is that he was born in 1884, but I do not know exactly where. He probably was not from Tartu as someone would have known something about his family in that case. I do not know how he happened to be in Tartu. Mother mentioned that they

had a true Jewish wedding: Grandfather made all the arrangements in accordance with the Jewish traditions.

I was born on 24th April 1924. I was called Anatoli. For some reason I did not have a Jewish name. My father did not live with us for a long time. He was not a bad man, but he had a great flaw, which was not characteristic of Jews, he took to the bottle. I was a year and a half, when Mother divorced him. Father moved to Tallinn after the divorce. We never spoke about him at home.

After my parents' divorce, I saw my father only several times. I remember, once he came to us looking very weak after a drinking bout. He asked Grandfather for money. Grandfather did not give him anything and Father asked me to help him. He must have thought that I would ask Grandpa, but I did not do that. I loved tinned soldiers. I had a great many of them. They cost a lot of money and my kin always gave them to me on special occasions, like birthdays etc. I was sorry for my father as he looked so miserable. Thus, I gave him my soldiers so that he could sell them and have money. It was the last but one meeting. The last time I saw my father was in July 1941, when he was going to the war.

My father had a dreadful fate. For some reason he was not willing to leave Tallinn. Many Jews decided to stay thinking that the Germans would do them no harm. But it was not the case. Hardly had the Germans entered Tallinn, all Jewish men were arrested and sent to Tallinn camps. They were interrogated and mutilated, then murdered. When Estonia became independent, the archives were opened and I was able to read the protocol of my father's interrogation on 2nd August 1941 carried out by Evald Mixon, an Estonian. The sentence was also attached. The line 'Charged with?' says only one thing: Jew. Conclusion: sentenced to death. Before 6th October 1941 almost 1000 Jews were shot in Tallinn.