

Olga Kann



This is my mother Olga Kann. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1936.

Mother's parents were rich, they were not nouveau riche, but well-mannered secular people. There were three daughters in the Kann family and all of them had Russian names. My mother Olga was the eldest. She was born in 1911. Her middle sister, Ksenia, was born in 1912, and the youngest, Elena, was born in 1914. The family immigrated to France in 1916.

All the daughters got very good education. Mother studied at the prestigious French lyceum. Then Grandpa made arrangements for her to study in Germany. Mother was the most beautiful out of all

the daughters and Grandfather really pampered her. French was a native language for my mother. It was amazing that the Russian language was also spoken in their family. The middle sister, Ksenia, could speak and write in Russian. The youngest Elena, could not write, she did not even know the alphabet, but she spoke fluent Russian, though with a French accent.

Somehow my mother made friends with my father's sister Nata. My parents met at her wedding and fell in love with each other instantly. Father had to finish his studies at the university. He stayed in Paris for a little bit and then left for Tartu. Mother and he decided that they were going to get married. They were separated for a little while. Mother was not willing to wait for Father to finish his studies and come to Paris. In 1934 she went to Tartu. Her parents were shocked. My maternal grandmother was sure that her favorite daughter was leaving for a village, where cows were walking along the streets. Mother promised Grandmother that she would return to Paris upon her fiancé's graduation. My parents got married, when Mother came to Tartu. They had a true Jewish wedding with numerous guests. After the wedding they settled in Grandfather's house. Their house was large. There was enough room for everybody.