

Aizic And Hana Lea Calmanovici With Cousins



The one sitting on the left, with his legs crossed, is my father Aizic Calmanovici. To the right is my mother, Hana Lea Calmanovici. The others are their cousins. In the back row, from left to right: Iosif, Bella, Max and Rahel. The one to the right in the front row is Elca. Their last name was Rotaru. Their mother, Haia Liba Rotaru, was a sister of both my father's mother and my mother's father -

like I told you, my parents were first degree cousins and they were granted a royal dispensation to get married. None of them was married at the time.

My mother was born on March 3, 1903 in Sulita. People called my mother Anuta, but officially, her name was Hana Lea. My father was born on August 8, 1900. His name was Aizic, but people also called him Mose.

My mother had a dowry, my grandfather was rich, richer than the grandfather from my father's side. And do you know how it was formerly? If the dowry were large, cousins, relatives would marry each other, so that the fortune wouldn't be estranged – such was the notion. But my mother – it's not the fact that she was my mother, yet – was both very beautiful and very smart. And my parents were cousins. You wouldn't believe it, if I told you. My father's mother and my mother's father were brother and sister. And they weren't allowed to get married according to the laws that were in force back then, during the rule of king Mihai. [Ed. note: The ruling of the Romanian kings during these decades is the following: King Ferdinand I. 1914-1927, King Michael 1927-1930, King Carol II. 1930-1940. After King Ferdinand's death in 1927 the Romanian Monarchy goes through private and political crises. Related link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Romania]. They needed a royal exemption in order for them to get married. For the fact that they were cousins was public knowledge in Sulita. If this were to happen in Bucharest, the people at the registrar's office would have been none the wiser. And then my mother wrote a complaint – or her parents did, I can't say for sure – to the king, and she had to base her argument on the fact that they had lived together. Formerly, sleeping with a man before getting married – oh my, it was a crime. To make love – I won't say to have sex, for I dislike saying that – before the marriage, oh my, it was serious. Especially in a small town. And they were so chaste – that's what they tell me, I wasn't born at that time. And that's how their marriage was approved.

My grandmother from my father's side, Perla Calmanovici, had a sister, her name was Haia Liba – Hai' Leba in Jewish –, who married a certain Rotaru. They lived in Sulita as well, he was a carpenter. They had several children: Iosif, Bella, Max, Rahel, Elca, Roza... They were around 8. The girls were housewives, they got married, all of them. You know, parents didn't formerly want their daughters to have jobs – they married them. It was the men who had to have a job. Iosif – his Jewish name was Iosl – was a carpenter, just like his father. Every single one of them lived in Sulita, then they too were evacuated ¹, relocated to Botosani during World War II. These cousins of my parents lived in Botosani for a while as well, but eventually all of them left to Israel, absolutely all of them.