

Hasse Nahumova And Her Family



This is my mother's family in this photo. From left to right, row 1: Grandfather Nohum Nahumov with my mother Hasse, Grandmother Eide Nahumova with my mother's younger sister Lintzi, and my mother's older sister Sheve. Row 2: My mother's older brother Leo Nahumov and her older sister Juganna. This photo was taken in Viljandi in 1917.

My mother's family lived in Viljandi, a small, but very beautiful Estonian town. My mother and I never discussed this subject, but somehow I think my maternal grandparents also came from Estonia. My grandfather's name was Nohum Nahumov, and my grandmother's name was Eide. Her maiden name was Epstein. They lived in Viljandi, and this was where their children were born. My grandmother had a brother. His surname was Epstein, but I can't remember his first name. He lived in Tallinn with his family. My mother came from a very poor family. My grandfather caught fish, and my grandmother had a little store where she sold old items. People brought her whatever old junk they had: clothes, shoes, pots and pans or whatever else my grandmother sold in her store. She didn't make much on reselling these items, particularly considering that her suppliers were also poor people. They were awfully poor.

My grandparents had eleven or twelve children, but only four girls and one boy survived. The oldest one was my mother's brother Leo. The next one was a girl. Her name was Juganna. She must have had a Jewish name, but I don't know it. My mother's second sister was Sheve, but for some reason her family called her Pipsy. My mother Hasse was next. She was born in 1908. The youngest sister's name was Lintzi. Their childhood was no fun, I'd say. They were often hungry, and my grandmother couldn't spend much time with her children, being busy in her store. My mother told me their main food was bread and salted sprats, and they were happy when there was bread on their table. However, they grew up strong and healthy. My mother liked salted fish till her old age. She found it delicious.

My grandfather, Nohum, didn't live to grow old. He died in his early 50s. There was something wrong with his lungs. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Viljandi. I can't remember when, but according to my mother this happened when she was in her teens and lived with her parents. When my grandfather died, his family faced an even more difficult life. The children only got some

elementary education. I guess, my mother finished elementary school and had to assist her mother in the store. In 1929 my mother went to Tallinn. Viljandi was a small town, and there were more chances to find a job in Tallinn. Mama had no special education and went to work at the 'Punnale Kojt' haberdashery factory. The factory produced lace, ribbons and sewing accessories. My mother worked packing laces. She worked there for twelve years until June 1941.