

Nisia Johes With Her Schoolmates



This photo was taken on Leonishki farm near Vilnius where Doctor Shabath's son rented a plot of land. Nisia, my uncle Meishke Johes' wife, is in the center. She studied at the agricultural faculty and worked there part time. This photo was taken in the middle of the 1930s. Meishke was my father's youngest brother. He was born in 1914. He followed into his father's footsteps and made his living by painting. Meishke kept his fondness of poetry a secret from his family. Many years after the Great Patriotic War I learned that Meishke was a member of 'Young Vilnius', the organization of young poets, writers and artists. He wrote beautiful romantic poems. The only living poet from this organization, Sutzkever, who was a witness at the Nuremberg trials, lives in Israel. I met with him and he spoke warmly about Meishke. In 1938 Meishke got married. His wife Nisia was an agronomist. Meishke and Nisia moved to Lvov in 1939. Nisia continued her education there and Meishke entered the Lvov Teachers' Training University. At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War Meishke disappeared. Nisia evacuated to Uzbekistan. Almost right after Vilnius was liberated I received a letter from aunt Nisia, my uncle Meishke's wife. I was very happy to learn she had survived. After the war she moved to Moscow, defended a candidate's dissertation, remarried and gave birth to two children. I visited her in Moscow several times. If my memory doesn't fail me, she died in 1998.