

Ida Merzan And Her Cousins At The Manor In Skryhiczyn



This is the manor in Skryhiczyn; this is where Aunt Hena and Uncle Mordechaj Rottenberg lived.

That boy, who is standing at the top is their son, Piniek. That girl at the front in the uniform is Ida, Aunt Masza and Uncle Chaim Halperin's daughter. Later her surname was Merzan. I don't recognize the other persons.

My father's family owned the estate of Skryhiczyn near the little town of Dubienka in the Lublin province. There was a short time in Tsarist Russia when Jews were allowed to buy land, and then my grandfather's mother, Ita Rottenberg, bought Skryhiczyn from a German.

Jews rarely owned land. Skryhiczyn was later the property of my grandfather, Szmuel Rottenberg, and his brother Chaim. Grandfather had one manor and his brother another.

My grandfather's manor was burned down during World War I. Grandfather died in 1915 in Odessa, so I never knew him. He had 10 children, Zlata, Hena, Fajga, Chaja, Masza, Natan, Henocho, Josel, Mordechaj, and Szloma, my father.

After Grandfather's death the estate was divided up into farms for each of the children, each one with 60 hectares of land plus so many hectares of woodland and meadow. Each of the children built themselves a separate house.

The manor was rebuilt, too, and my father's sister, Aunt Hena, lived there, and my grandmother Ryfka Rottenberg. It was a fairly large, sprawling single-story manor, with a porch and with a very nice orchard and a vegetable and flower garden.

Most of all I liked the iron gate at the entrance and the fence that encircled the garden. During World War II there were Germans in the manor, after the war a co-operative, and after that both the fence and the house were taken down, what was wooden was taken and burned, and what was brick was dismantled and taken for bricks.

Now all there is there is grass, nobody builds anything there. The land belongs to farmers who were given it after the agricultural reform.

Ida Halperin was born in Odessa in 1907. When the Revolution broke out she went to Kishinev, to her father's family. She did her school-leaving exams there and then came to Poland.

After the vacation she went to Warsaw and enrolled for a course for pre-school teachers run by Janusz Korczak. She lived in the home for future pre-school teachers in Korczak's orphanage. Later Korczak employed her there.

Two years before the war she started work in the Centos home in Otwock. After that I worked there too, and she was my immediate superior. She got married and in 1938 had a daughter. In September 1939 we reached Kovel together.

From there she left for the Soviet Union. She came back to Poland in 1945. Just after the war she had a son. She worked writing pedagogical advice for parents for various magazines, for *Moje Dziecko* [My Baby], for *Przyjaciółka* [Girlfriend], for *Gazeta Żydowska* [The Jewish Newspaper].

I don't remember her having a permanent job; she always wrote, she wrote books, and wrote for magazines. She lived in Warsaw. She died a few years ago.