

Zalman Kaplanas And His Relatives



These are my relatives during the stay in Jurbarkas of Meyer Grinberg, my mother's brother, who came from the USA in 1930. Grandfather's house is in the background of the picture. Meyer, dressed in a dark suit is in the second row to the right, his wife is to the left of him. My grandfather Morduchai Grinberg is in the second row to the left. I am standing in the front first from the right,

my cousin, Meyer's daughter, Mariam Grinberg, is to the left of me. I don't remember the names of the rest.

My family comes from the small town of Jurbarkas 200 kilometers away from Vilnius. My maternal grandpa, Morduchai Grinberg, was born in Jurbarkas in 1864. Morduchai was involved in commerce. He was neither rich nor poor. His wife, Grunya, was also born in Jurbarkas. She died at a rather young age from some sort of a disease in 1905. She died and six children became orphans. Grandpa didn't remarry, though he was a rather young man. He didn't want his children to be brought up by a stepmother. Morduchai and Grunya had three sons and three daughters.

The eldest son, Meyer, born in 1885, left for the USA in his adolescence. It happened at the beginning of the 20th century, before Grandmother Grunya had died. In America Meyer married a wealthy Jew. He developed her father's pharmaceutical business and made a brilliant career and became a millionaire in the 1920s. In 1930 Meyer and his daughter Mariam, who was my age, came to Jurbarkas. We had a family reunion on that occasion. There was a joyful get-together, which lasted a couple of days, with incessant laughter and chatter. Then Meyer left and didn't keep in touch. Meyer was a miser. He never helped neither his parents nor his siblings. He died in the mid-1960s having bequeathed the lion's share of his fortune to his daughter and the rest to charity funds. I didn't keep in touch with Mariam. I don't know anything about her life.

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