

Ranana Malkhanova And Her Family



This is me, being held by a distant relative, during one of our visits to Pilviskiai, and my brother Zeyev is on the right. This picture was taken in Pilviskiai in 1934 and sent to my mother by her brother Lipo from Canada. My brother was born in 1924. He was given an ancient Jewish name, Zeyev. My father knew Ivrit and he was fond of ancient names. Even the dog had an ancient Jewish name, Nadhon. When I was born on 6th November 1932, I was also given an ancient Jewish name, Ranana. I had a happy childhood in a rather rich house, with overwhelming love. I enjoyed spending time with my mother most of all. My mother was a true lady. She stopped teaching at the lyceum after getting married. Of course, she looked after the house, but she didn't do any manual

work, just gave orders to the maids. Her way of life was the same as the other rich ladies. Ester regularly went to the milliner. She probably had the most fashionable dresses in the entire Vilkauskis. She had a number of fur coats from expensive pelt, and beautiful jewelry. But there were no places to wear it in our tiny town. My mother spent most of her time having coffee and cakes with the ladies from her circle. Sometimes she took me for a walk. These were the happiest moments for me. I remember our little town with its one-storied mansions, rich in verdure. The streets went down to a small river: Sheshupa, where children used to have fun on a small beach. I wasn't allowed to play with them. I practically had no friends in my early childhood. I spent time with my mother, governess and brother. My brother was eight years older than me but I managed to tease him. I got away with it, as I was the favorite, and pride of my father. I started talking early in Yiddish and Lithuanian, as these were the languages spoken in our house. When my father came home from work, he put me on his neck and took me outside. If he met some of his acquaintances he used to boast around, 'Ranana, say international!' and like a parrot I repeated the words without understanding the meaning.