

The Beitner Family



The picture was taken on the occasion of my father Ajzyk Baitner's sister's, wedding. Her name was Rozia. I don't remember the name of her husband, who is not present in the picture.

In the picture there are my father's parents and almost all his sisters and brothers with their husbands and wives, except my father, who was in the Prussian army at that time.

From the left, in the first row (sitting): Szlomo's wife, Szlomo Beitner, my grandmother Zofia (nee Weksler), Rozia Beitner, my grandfather Ajzyk Beitner, Ida Oppenheim (nee Beitner), Jakub Beitner.

From the right, in the second row: Jakub's wife, Chaim Beitner, his wife Cesia Beitner (nee Weksler), Tobiasz Beitner, his wife Mania Beitner (nee Londner), Nachman Beitner and his wife Rywcia Beitner.

Father's family came from Dabrowa Gornicza. I only remember one grandfather from my father's side, Ajzyk Beitner. I don't have any memories except for one meeting with Grandfather, maybe because he was so sick then.

He was in bed, in some dark room, his legs were hurting. I think he had diabetes and died shortly afterwards in Dabrowa Gornicza. I only remember that when they told me, I cried a lot.

I think he died in 1928, because I was at school then, it could have been first grade. I don't remember his wife at all.

My grandparents had a hardware store, one of their sons who was living in Dabrowa, Nachman, operated that store. It must have been a family business.

My grandparents were living in some one room shack, in a non-Jewish district, a mixed one. And that's where the hardware store was located, next to the house. I remember the kitchen - there was a table, a cupboard and a stove, for cooking, with removable eyes.

This was all small, small windows overlooking the street, yes. The store was large, with an entrance from the street. I remember the counter and drawers, all kinds of nails, screws, nuts, hammers, all kinds of equipment for building works, maybe even machine parts were sold there.

Uncle Nachman, Father's brother, lived near my grandparents' house and so did Father's sister, Aunt Rozia. They must have been taking care of Grandpa somehow.

They lived in this small single-family house, as you'd call it today. I visited this Uncle Nachman and Aunt Rozia in Dabrowa several times. They had children and we were more or less the same age. This Nachman and his wife Rywcia had a daughter named Chawa, or Ewa, and a son, Jankiel. Jankiel survived the war, as the only one from the family in Dabrowa. There were three children at Rozia's: the daughters' names were Zosia and Jadzia and there was also a boy.

There were seven sons in Father's family: Jakub, Szlomo, Tobiasz, Chaim, Herman - my father, Abram and Nachman, and two sisters: Rozia and Ida. It was a traditional family, with many children.

They were all religious. Except for my father and Uncle Nachman they all had beards and side-locks and went to the synagogue. They dressed normally; I don't think they wore those kapotes.

Nachman was living in Dabrowa Gornicza where all the people knew each other, so he was religious, too, but he didn't wear a beard, so he must have been kind of rebellious.

There was also one brother in America; I only met him in Israel. His name was Abram. He must have emigrated before I was born. He also shaved.

Father and his siblings spoke Yiddish. So did my grandparents. They probably knew Polish, German, but spoke Yiddish to each other.