

Tobiash Starozum's Cousin Shloime Klain



My cousin Shloime Klain. Photo made in Kovel in 1940 after he escaped from Poland occupied by fascists. He mailed this picture to aunt Esther in Moscow to let her know that he had escaped.

My grandfather on my mother's side Mendel Klain owned an inn in Grabovo. The majority of population in Grabovo was Polish, but there were also Jews: shoemakers, tailors, clock repairmen, glasscutters and bakers. There were sausage stores owned by Jews. I remember kosher goose sausage. My grandfather had a big house with bitumen felt roof and verandah. On the first floor there was a their store where they were selling candy, cookies, herring, all essential goods. They also made and sold ice cream. My grandfather was very religious. He prayed twice a day with his tahles and tefillin on. He didn't work in his store on Saturday. My grandfather only spoke Yiddish. There were only religious books in Hebrew at their home.

My grandmother Perl Klain was a gray-haired and tiny woman. She always wore a long skirt, a shawl on her head and a snow-white apron. There was always ideal order at home and in the store. My grandmother spoke Yiddish, but with her Polish customers she spoke Polish. I know that my grandmother didn't have any education and couldn't write, but she handled her customers well. She was religious and observed everything our God required from us. My grandparents were not rich, but very respectable people in the town. They raised 5 children and were very proud of them.

All boys in the Klain family studied at cheder in Grabovo and went to synagogue with their father. In Lodz they stopped going to synagogue and stopped being religious people. This was a trend of the their time. However, they observed Jewish traditions and celebrated holidays. Their mother tongue was Yiddish, but they also knew Polish and Russian.

My grandparents' older son Laibl Klain, born in 1885, finished cheder in Grabovo and worked as a textile worker in Lodz afterward. He perished during occupation. His son Shlome, born in 1917, was a composer. He managed to escape to the Soviet Union. I know that he reached Kovel and got

together with my aunt Esther. We met with him in Moscow. He was a very cheerful and talented man. Shlome was in evacuation in Siberia during the war. He worked at a club and had very little food. In 1946 he moved to Palestine. He died in Israel in 1970s.