

Kati Andai's Paternal Grandmother Maria Deutsch



My paternal grandmother. I knew my grandmother, Mari Perl, because she lived almost a hundred years. She was born in 1841, and I knew her. She might have had basic schooling because she could read, and she did read, mostly the prayer book. Just like a country woman. I was shocked by the fact that if she couldn't eat something she said it would be good for Mari. And the servant ate the food she left. There was nobody else but the servant. At most the farm laborer's wife helped out if needed. But she raised her daughters to be very domestic, and they knew how to cook and bake, and they made all kinds of decorated fancy-cakes and sweets when the suitors came. My grandmother was a very hard, energetic woman, but she had to be like that [in order to get on with housekeeping, the children, and the land]. But she read the prayer book night and day, and knew every prayer by memory. I can still see her reading with the magnifying glass, but I could only see Hebrew letters there. I don't think she was interested in anything else. Come to think of it, though, she was interested in gossip. My grandmother's family observed their religion in a very particular

way: they observed what was more comfortable to observe. The housekeeping was not kosher. They ate pork; with reluctance, but they still ate it. We were always invited there [to the house of my grandmother on my father's side] for Seder Eve, and all the brothers were there. The high holidays were observed by everybody in their own homes. The Seder was led by my eldest uncle, and for a time it was I who asked the questions, but then there was somebody younger than me, and then that person did. There was no synagogue in Felpec, only a prayer house. At festival times, the Jews gathered together there. There were a few Jewish families in neighboring Tet, and they visited each other.