

Tilda Galpert With Her Family



This is a family picture. On the left standing is my mother Helena Akerman (nee Weiss) and my younger brother Samuel Akerman is standing in front of her. On the right is my older sister Szerena Borkanyuk (nee Akerman) and I am standing in front of her. The photo was taken in Mukachevo in 1928. I don't know where or how my parents met. They got married in 1908 or 1909. Of course, they had a Jewish wedding. They didn't tell me any details. After the wedding they began to live with my mother's parents in Mukachevo. My sister Margarita, Gitl was her Jewish name, was born in 1909, my oldest brother David in 1911 and Fishl, Fulop in his documents, in 1912. In 1914 my sister Szerena followed. Her Jewish name was Surah. My brother Gershy was born in 1916. In his documents his name was given as Hugo. Aron followed in 1918. Then came Perl. She died in infancy. I was born in 1923. My Jewish name is Toby. I was the seventh child in the family. My youngest brother, Samuel, followed in 1925. His Jewish name was Shmil. This was our family. I'm the only one left. At the age of six I went to a Czech public elementary school. There was a Jewish

school in Mukachevo, but our parents sent us to a Czech school since it prepared for entrance to commercial academy. The next stage was lower secondary school where I studied four years and then I took a one-year training course preparing students to enter commercial academy. In general, we studied nine years. My brothers and sisters also went to this school. My older sister Szerena's wedding turned our family life upside down. After finishing commercial academy Szerena went to work in an insurance company. She was a well respected and dedicated employee. Szerena got fond of socialist ideas. A legal communist newspaper was published in Mukachevo: Zakarpatskaya Pravda. It was published by Oleksa Borkanyuk, deputy of the Czechoslovak Government from the Czechoslovak Communist Party. There was no ban on the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. Szerena offered her help with the publishing of this newspaper. This was how she met Oleksa Borkanyuk. They fell in love with each other. In 1936 they began to live together. Of course, there was no religious wedding. That my sister married a non-Jewish man was a huge blow to my parents. Our mother sat shivah for Szerena for a week like Jews do for someone who died. When this was over she refused to see Szerena ever again. Szerena's husband was a very nice person and a good husband, but he wasn't a Jew. They rented an apartment in Mukachevo where I visited them several times. Other brothers and my sister also visited Szerena. I didn't tell my mother that I went to see Szerena. My mother didn't bear the mentioning of Szerena's name and never saw her again. Szerena and her husband had to move to Uzhhorod to cut off people's discussions and rumors. Later, on our way to Auschwitz, I said, 'I wish we knew about Tsyka' - we called Szerena Tsyka at home. My mother replied, 'I don't want to hear about her again'. That's how religious education works: it was planted so deep in my mother's conscience that she even rejected her own daughter. My mother was ashamed of Szerena's marriage. I think that probably if it hadn't been for the Jewish surrounding my mother would have forgiven Szerena. She couldn't do it since other people would have condemned her.