

Henrich Kurizkes And His Family



This photo was taken when we were out in the forest near Tallinn. I am sitting in the center of the front row. My mama is beside me. In the front row, from right to left: my cousin Sterna Schulkleper, Mama's brother Iosif's wife, my cousin Sara Schulkleper, Mama's brother Abram's daughter, their friend Sophia Amitan, my cousin Mira Schulkleper, Mama's brother Marcus' daughter. The man wearing a bow-tie is my father Lazar Kurizkes. These are all I remember. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1930. My mother's family lived in Tallinn. The oldest in the family was my mother's older brother Marcus Schulkleper. He was called Max in the family. The second son was Abram and then came Iosif and David. Then my mother's sister Polina was born. My mother Revekka, born in 1896, was the last child in the family. My mother's brothers and sister had a secular education. My mother graduated from a Russian high school in Tallinn. I don't know why my mother's parents chose this Russian high school. It was an eleven-year course. It provided a good and solid knowledge of the subjects the children studied. My mama spoke fluent German and could read in French. My mother's oldest brother Marcus married Tauba, a Jewish girl. They had two daughters: Debora, born in 1909, and Mirah, born in 1915. Marcus was engaged in commerce and his wife was a housewife. Marcus' brother Iosif also worked with him. Iosif was married, his wife's name was Genia. Their daughter Sterna was born in the late 1910s. Abram owned a fabric store. Somehow Abram went bankrupt in the late 1920s. It must have been a hard blow for him and he died in the early 1930s. Abram's wife's name was Ester, his daughter's name was Sara. During World War II, Ester and Sara were evacuated, then they came to Tallinn. Ester died in Tallinn in the 1960s. I didn't know my mother's younger brother David. He died before I was born. My mother's sister Polina married Vigura, a Polish man, and they moved to Katowice in Poland. My parents got acquainted at a party and got married in 1922. I was born in 1924, and I was the only child in the family. I was given the name of Henrich. When I was in 2nd grade, my mother went to work as an accountant in an office. We spoke Yiddish and Russian at home. My parents mostly spoke Russian to me, but it took me no time to pick some Yiddish. Children are good at languages. My parents were moderately religious. Of course, all Jewish traditions were well observed in our household.

Mama followed kashrut. She only bought meat from a Jewish butcher. She also bought hens at the market to take them to the shochet. The shochet worked near the synagogue. Mama took care of the housework even when she went to work.