

Henryk Prajs And His Uncle's Wife With The Torah From Gora Kalwaria



This is a photo of me and my uncle Mosze's wife. In the center is the Torah, which I sent to Israel after the war. This photo was taken in Netanya in 1965. When the relocation to the ghetto started in May 1940, the head of the Jewish community in Gora, Josef Lubliner, came to my Polish neighbor Rytko, and left him the Torah and all the sacred books. Rytko, as the decent man that he was, kept them safe throughout the war. When I came back after the war, he gave the books to me as his neighbor. I later sent them to Israel, to my Uncle Mosze. I simply put them in a parcel, went to

Professor Tyloch to get a certificate they were not items of historical value, and sent them by post; legally, absolutely. I should think it was in the 1960s. The Torah is now in Israel, in Netanya. Only one member of my family survived the war, Uncle Mosze. My calculations show I've lost 36 members of my immediate family, meaning the aunts and their children. Uncle Mosze miraculously survived somewhere in the Sandomierz region. He stayed with a farmer just like me, or so they say. I never asked him. His wife was killed. After the war he remarried in Lodz. He settled with his second wife in Gora Kalwaria. In 1950 they moved to Israel together. They had a son, Dawid. Uncle Mosze became a farmer in Israel, he had some land, an orchard, he kept geese. He died in May 1972. I've been to Israel twice, in 1965 and 1990. Nothing special about the trip, I asked for a visa and got it, they refused the first time but later changed their mind. Jerusalem was still divided in 1965, so I couldn't get to Bethlehem, to the tomb [Rachel's tomb just outside Bethlehem], the Wailing Wall was also on the other side, but you could more or less see it. I don't know if a million Jews lived there at the time, maybe a million and a half, not more. The immigration increased after the 1967 war.