

Ruth Strazh With Her Parents Esther And Max Brodowski



This photo was taken before my sister Sofia was born. This is my mother Esther Brodowski, my father Max Brodowski and I. This photo was taken in Valga in 1928. My parents had a traditional Jewish wedding. Both families were religious, and all of my mother's and father's brothers and sisters had Jewish weddings. My mother and father stayed in Berlin for six months while my father had practice in a clinic there before they moved back to Valga. They rented an apartment. It was a big apartment, and my father also established his office where he received patients. I remember that my father never allowed my sister or me to enter his office. He was a very tidy person, and he suffered even when a pencil on his desk happened to be in the place. Nobody, but Mama, was

allowed to clean his office. I was born in Tartu in 1925. Mama went to Tartu to have her first baby in a clinic there having been told that there were the best doctors and conditions in this clinic. Everything went well despite her concerns, and after I was born Mama and I returned to Valga. I was the first girl, born to the family after Mama's older sister Rohe-Gitl died, and so I was given the name of Ruth starting with the first letter of her name. This is an old Jewish name. My younger sister Sofia was born in Valga in 1929. Mama delivered her at home, and my father and a midwife attended to her. My sister's Jewish name is Soreh, and in her documents she had the name of Sofia. In the family we spoke Yiddish, German and Estonian. Mama also spoke fluent Russian. My sister and I already spoke three languages, when we were children. My sister and I had a nurse, but my mama's family spent a lot of time with us. My grandmother and grandfather lived quite nearby, and my sister and I often visited them. We probably spent as much time with our grandparents as we did at home. My grandmother and grandfather loved us dearly, and my childhood memories are closely attached to them. Mama's brothers also spent a lot of time with us. I also loved them dearly. I never addressed them with 'Aunt' or 'Uncle', but just by their first names. They were religious and observed Jewish traditions. I remember Grandpa putting on his tallit and tefillin to pray in the morning and in the evening. We knew that we were not allowed to disturb Grandfather, when he was praying. When he didn't, he took us out and told us stories from the Bible that were very much like fairy tales.