

Wacek Kornbum, His Little Brother Borus, Stepmother And Cousin



This is me, my mom Lonia Kornblum, my brother Borus and my cousin Renia Tygiel on holiday in Falenica. This photo was made on Borus' first birthday, on 22nd August 1933. There's even an inscription on the reverse: 'Tsum ershten geburtstag, 22 august 33'. So he is one year old.

My mom Lonia - Lea Kornblum - nee Mileband, was born in 1900. Dad got married to Lonia some time around 1929. I don't have information what school she went to, but she was a teacher before she got married, a home room teacher, and she may have also taught Polish at Korczak's, on Krochmalna Street. I knew Lonia wasn't my mom, but I didn't feel it. Mom was a very smart woman. But from the time perspective, I realize I didn't experience true motherly love. I was a bit browbeaten, always very shy.

Almost every year we used to go for holidays with the family, usually to the so called Linia - a row of tourist-health resort towns located on the line Warsaw-Otwock. We went to Otwock, Falenica, once to Swider, many times to Miedzeszyn, once to Jablonna - summer resort towns near Warsaw. And once to Kazimierz. We usually took a train to the Linia, but we took a ship to Kazimierz on the Vistula River, from Warsaw. And our things, because we used to bring everything, we used to send by a horse carriage. I remember we would load things up at 6am and the horse carriage would get to the destination by night.

We used to go for a month, sometimes two. Estusia, mom's niece who used to live with us, would come with us, of course. Once she stayed behind on the train station, she didn't manage to get on the train, and it was a big fuss, was she going to come on the next train or not. She did. Some summers Kuba came with us, too. Once Dad did it so that Aunt Chawcia and Izaak came as well.

My brother Borus was born in 1932. Borus derives from Ber - Dov in Hebrew, which means a bear. Now he uses also his Polish name Wladek, or Wladzio - Wladyslaw. I remember when he was born Grandmother Gela was laid ill. In Jewish 'brist' means 'brisket' that's how we call meat: brist. And brit mila means circumcision, but here in Warsaw people used to call it brist mila. And Grandma asked me when I came to visit her: 'Vus makht di mame?', 'What is mom doing?', 'Zi makht a brist', 'She's doing 'brist' - I answered, thinking about meat and everyone laughed in the whole family. I remember very well when Borus lay in the other room in a bed with a lifted front, with bars, so that he wouldn't fall out.

I remember that on Purim we used to visit the Aunts. Borus was quite small then, but I already had a deal in it. There is a custom that on Purim children used to get purimgelt Yiddish: money for Purim. And I remember Uncle Braunrot prepared for that holiday a roll of grosze and we got that. We had little flags, greger - a rattler, it's a little mechanism on a stick, like a flag, which, when span, it rattled. The more you spin it, the more it upsets Haman. There was also a spot for a candle.

Renia was the third daughter of my mother's sister Chana. She was a very pretty woman, who lived with her parents, married, before the war, Elek, who was mildly cross-eyed. Elek was a taxi driver, when he was to take a test to become a taxi driver, I questioned him about where what streets were, and he would tell me off hand how to get there. He used to drive a German car, a Steier.