

Liza Lukinskaya And Her Family

This is our family photograph, made in Siauliai in Rubinskiy's photo studio in 1933. On the right my mother Feiga Abramson, my father Isaac Abramson is sitting in the center, I am to the left and my brother Abram Abramson is on the top.

My elder brother Abram was born in 1918, and on the 13th of May 1920 I was born. Our father was a representative of the owners at Guberniya brewery. Father's friends also belonged to the middle class. As a rule, husbands worked and their spouses were housewives. Mother's friends came over every once in a while. They had tea or coffee with Mother's pies, browsed fashionable magazines and played cards. Women met once a week. Each of them received guests in turns. Sometimes they went out to eat ice-cream and drink liqueur. Mother often took me with her. She was a fashionable lady. She had her clothes made by the best milliner in Siauliai. She enjoyed shopping. She liked stores that sold readymade goods and haberdashery. Mother always went to the store where threads, yarn and knitting needles were on offer. The owner of the store gave classes on needlework to beginners.

On weekend our whole family often went out together. There was a central park in front of our house. It was shady and beautiful. There was a chestnut alley not far from it. In summer Father rented a dacha for us a room and veranda in Pagegiai. It was a splendid place, with seven lakes in a row. Mother was good at kayaking. Every day she and I swam in the lakes. Sometimes she put us in the kayak. My parents were great swimmers. Special belts were made from corks for my brother and me. Soon we also learned how to swim. As a rule Father came over to us for a weekend and we had picnics in the garden or in the forest.

My parents weren't religious, though they kept up the traditions. Meat was bought only in kosher stores. Chicken and other poultry were always taken to a shochet. Sometimes Mother bought a tidbit-pork ham. She kept it in paper and gave it to me and my brother when nobody was around so that the neighbors wouldn't see. When I said that we couldn't eat pork, Mother gave me a surprised look and said, 'Where do you see pork, it's ham!'

Sabbath wasn't celebrated at home the way it was in traditional families. Though, my mother did her best. She baked challot, put wine and candles on the table, lit the candles herself. On Saturday there was always a festive dinner, but Father didn't go to the synagogue, moreover he had to work as Saturday was a working day at the brewery. Only when Grandmother Hana-Beila, who celebrated Sabbath, came to us from Kaunas, the whole family was at the table, and Grandmother said a prayer. Grandmother died in the early 1930s. I was very sick at that time and Mother couldn't leave me. Father went to his mother's funeral by himself. Grandmother was buried in accordance with the Jewish rites. The mourning period was also observed.