

Irena Wygodzka With Her Parents Herman And Bajla Beitner, Her Brother Natan Beitner And Sister Zosia Laks



This is a picture of my family, the Beitners. It was taken in 1932 after our family moved back to Poland.

When I was two years old my parents returned from Magdeburg, Germany, to Poland. We went to Katowice. That's where my two sisters were born, Zosia and Jadzia.

In this picture you can see my father, Stanislaw Wygodzki, first from left, then my brother Natan in the top row, me - Irena Wygodzka and then my mother, Bajla Beitner. My sister Zosia is in the bottom row, my father is holding her. My youngest sister, Jadzia, had not been born yet.

I remember the birth of my sister Zosia, because my mother gave birth at home. She didn't go to the clinic, like she did with Jadzia. It happened then, I was in first grade, that the servant came to get me from school.

On the way, as we were walking, we saw lots of people. Everyone was saying something: 'What happened, how did it happen?' It turned out that my brother had just been run over by a car.

So we came home and we told Mother that Natan had been run over by a car and that's when she went into labor. Natan was taken to the hospital, examined. It wasn't anything serious.

We later saw the man who stopped that car at the last moment, because the car would have backed up and smashed my brother's heart. It turned out it was a German, his name was Doctor Aronade.

He was a physician, a pediatrician. Anyway, that's when Zosia was born, after seven months of pregnancy.

Zosia was really tiny - Mother used to say 'she's as large as a knife,' I remember they put her in cotton, because there were no incubators then.

And later, several days after she was born, this same Doctor Aronade saved Zosia, because the baby started dying. The bed was near the furnace, carbon monoxide must have been coming out of it; coal was used for fuel then.

I remember that Doctor Aronade took two bowls, one with hot water, one with cold water and kept moving the baby from one bowl to the other and that's how he saved her.