

Arkadi Mil'grom's Mother Etah Mil'grom And Sister Dora Milgrom



This is my mother Etah Milgrom (nee Sirota) and my sister Dora, her sister is 6 months old. This photo was taken in Krasilov in 1921.

My mother Etah was born in 1898. She was black-haired and swarthy in contrast to her father. She mother finished two or three years in a Jewish school. She learned to read and write. When she was about 12, a 'Singer' dealer convinced my grandfather and grandmother to buy a sewing machine and train my mother in sewing. The family was very poor and they paid installments for a Singer sewing machine for about 15 years, but my mother learned a good craft and became one of the best seamstresses in Krasilov. My parents got married in 1919. Their marriage was prearranged by matchmakers which was customary with Jewish families, though my parents knew each other since childhood. They never told me about their wedding, but since they came from religious families I think that they had a traditional Jewish wedding. Shortly after their wedding my mother's father Avraam died in 1919. My parents settled down in my father's big house.

In 1920 my sister Dvoira was born. Later she adopted the name of Dora. On 20 July 1924 I was born. We lived in grandfather Iosif's house. There were four families living in this big house and four adult women: grandmother Leya, my father's sister Golda, my mother and later - my father brother Berl's wife Malka. All of them obeyed grandmother Leya who watched that there were no arguments and misunderstandings between the housewives. On weekdays each housewife cooked for her family. On Friday they got together to cook for Sabbath: gefilte fish, jellied meat and bread.

After grandfather came from the synagogue the family sat down to dinner. My grandmother lit candles and grandfather recited prayers. All Jewish holidays were celebrated in the house.

We were rather poor. What my father was earning was not enough and my mother had to go to work. She sewed at night drawing curtains tight on the windows fearing financial inspectors [state officer responsible for identification of illegal businesses]. My mother put her sewing machine onto a blanket to reduce the sound of it: she was afraid that somebody might hear and report on her. In 1932 a sewing shop was organized in Krasilov and all seamstresses were forced to go to work there. My mother had no other option, but joining this shop and taking her sewing machine there. Few years later, when the shop split they gave my mother back an old shabby sewing machine - instead of hers.