

The Pinkases In 1916-1917



These are the Pinkases in 1916-1917. The ones seated in the middle are grandpa Sason and grandma Bouka (a white-haired woman sitting on his left and wearing a brooch). The one standing between them is my mother Rashel. She's wearing a dark dress with buttons. The rest are the relatives (wheat-traders) and their children (my cousins). My mother was not married yet. She was the youngest in the family.

My mother, Rashel, was from a wheat-trader's family – her grandfather and her father Sason were intermediary wheat-traders. She (after finishing a Jewish school and junior high school) was the last one to get married. She knew Ladino and Ivrit, which she had probably studied at the Jewish school. She was the youngest child in the family. Her brothers and sisters – Sara, Soultana, Haim and Yosif were already married and everybody had settled down in a different house. My mother was very devoted to the house and when my father joined the family he paid off the shares to the other inheritors from her family.

In my memories my mother Rashel Pinkas was an extremely neat lady - big, massive and beautiful. We all looked like midgets next to her. She was so hard-working – could do the job not of one and two people, but of four people together. Even nowadays I wonder when she was sleeping. I don't remember her complaining to be exhausted or to say she was unable to do something or not to know how to do it. She used to deal with so many things. At that time we didn't have socks. Some unbelievable things would be unknitted so that the wool would be used for knitting socks. I learned how to knit socks at the age of twelve. If she managed to take wool from the villagers she would knit me a sweater, a bodice or something else. She was busy all the time – either sewing, knitting, ironing, or soaking laundry in some indescribable lye mixtures. That procedure was important because the laundry could be seen from the other end of the street so it had to be snow white no matter that it was heavily patched up. She used to also help my father at the store as well. And this continued till we were old enough to leave the house and the town of Vidin after finishing high school.