

Raisa Roitman With Her Brother Motle And Cousins



This is my brother Motle Rubel, sitting on the stool in the center and I, Raisa Roitman, am on the right. My cousins Golda Rubel and Fira Lerner are standing behind me, Feiga Lerner is sitting. The picture was taken in Vad-Rashkov in 1932.

My parents got married on 11th November 1924. I was born on 21st April 1926. I was given the Jewish name of Ruklya, but I was registered with a more modern Russian name – Raisa. My parents called me Raisa, only Great-grandmother Haya called me by my Jewish name. In 1930 my brother Motle was born. I remember the day when my mother was giving birth to my brother. Father was going to and fro. The moans and screams were heard from the bedroom. Then I heard the cry of the baby. I remembered it for ever. I loved my brother at once. I had a kind of adult and maternal feelings for him.

I remember my childhood very vividly. I recollect our house – a small adobe low-set house, consisting of two small rooms and a kitchen. There was a stove in the kitchen, which was heated with firewood. It was used to cook food. Later on we had a Primus, and Mother used the stove only for heating purposes and during preparation for Sabbath, when a lot of dishes were supposed to be cooked and kept warm for the next day. On Sabbath we often went to Grandfather Moishe. All the children and grandchildren got together in the drawing-room. The table was laid with such festive dishes as gefilte fish, chicken broth and tsimes. Challah and wine were in the center of the table, and Grandfather was saying a benediction. After that, I, the favorite granddaughter, came up to

everybody with a wine carafe on the tray and everybody was supposed to sip wine from that vessel. We also observed the kashrut.

My mother's brother Ousher was born in 1899. He lived not far from my grandfather with his wife Klara and three daughters - Fira, Feiga and Mara. Ousher was a peasant. His wife and children did their best to help him with work, but their family still lived from hand to mouth.