

Maria Sorkina And Her Family



This is our family photograph. I remember well when it was taken. It was in Aluksne on Pesach 1908. Our family had dinner and decided to have a stroll after dinner. It was a lovely day and all of us went for a walk. My father suggested that we drop by a photo studio to have a photographer take a picture of us for the memory. From left to right: my older sister Rosa, I, mama Ida Kaplan, my older brother Sahne, my father Efroyim Kaplan and my younger sister Revekka beside him.

We celebrated all Jewish holidays. Before Pesach we did a general clean-up, and the children also helped. Matzah was delivered from Vilnius and other places. Usually, we bought matzah. I remember one Pesach, when for some reason no matzah had been supplied. My mother made arrangements with our neighbors, and they baked matzah together. Someone made and rolled the dough, and someone else watched the stove. At other times we had a few big baskets full of matzah delivered to our place. There was sufficient matzah to last through the holidays. There was no bread to be eaten on this holiday. There was always some matzah left after the holiday, and we liked having one bite or another of it. My mother made sure that all of her utensils and dishes were kosher. We had two sets: one for meat products, and another for dairies. We also had special utensils and dishes for Pesach. After the holiday it was stored in a cupboard, and my mother didn't allow us to open it. My father believed that it was better to have silver tableware. My father liked silver and spent a lot of money on it. We had silver tableware, cups and tea accessories, for Pesach stored in a box. Pesach silverware was also very beautiful. We had silver cups for wine, nice plates and dishes.

My parents were sure to go to the synagogue on Pesach, and they took the children with them. My father and brother went to the men's quarters, and my mother and I went to a special room for women. My father conducted the seder on Pesach. Our home was so beautiful on Pesach! I've never seen anything like our home, or such a beautiful seder. The family got together in the living room where we usually received guests. My mother covered the table with our most beautiful tablecloth. All the lamps were on, and the light reflected in the silverware. It was bright and very beautiful. This is one of the brightest memories of my childhood. My father wore white clothes and reclined on cushions. My brother posed the four traditional questions. We followed all the rituals, including the afikoman and singing Pesach songs. There was the biggest and most beautiful silver

cup with wine for Elijah the Prophet. We had smaller cups. The door was kept open for the Prophet. Children commonly played with walnuts. Each of us had many walnuts on Pesach, I remember.