

Ella Perlman And Her Family



This is our family photograph taken shortly before the war. From left to right: sitting, my mama Hana Greenfeld, my brother Boris Greenfeld, my father Hershe Greenfeld. My sister Joheved is standing on the left, I am on the right. This photo was taken in Riga in 1941. This is a copy of the photo that I've made for myself. My sister has the original in Israel.

My parents got married in 1924. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. After the wedding my parents rented an apartment. Mama quit her job after getting married. I was the first child in the family. I was born in the maternity ward of the Jewish hospital in 1926. My sister and both brothers were also born in this hospital. I was named Ella after my paternal grandfather's second wife, who raised my orphaned father and his brother. My sister Joheved was born in 1928. In 1933 my brother Ber was born. His Russian name was Boris. My youngest brother Lipman was born in 1937. Lipman did not live long. When he was three months old he caught a cold. It developed into pneumonia and the doctors failed to rescue him.

Our family observed Jewish traditions. On Friday morning Mama made food for two days. She baked challah and rolls for Saturday, and left a pot with chulent in the stove to keep it hot till the following day. In the evening Mama and Grandmother, at the time when she was still living with us, lit candles and prayed over them. Then the family sat down to dinner. There was challah, chicken broth and gefilte fish on holidays. We followed the kashrut, and Mama even kept utensils for meat products and those for dairy products in different cupboards not to be mixed.

The boys had their bar mitzvah, when they turned 13. It was a big ceremony. A boy was told to approach the Torah for the first time at the synagogue, and then he put on tefillin and tallit. Since that moment he was considered to be a grown up man, and could take part in the minyan like adult men. We spoke Yiddish at home and learned German and Latvian playing with children in the yard.

My sister and I helped our mother about the house. In the morning Mama told me what I was to buy at the market after school. I always went to the market, when Mama did, and she showed me how

to choose the groceries to buy. I knew the best vendors to buy meat, sauerkraut or vegetables from. The vendors also wanted to sell the best they had to the children, in order for us to have no problems at home about whatever they brought.

On Saturday my parents did not do any work at home. On Sunday Mama usually did the laundry. My father was a barber and his customers, who wanted a shave or a haircut, came to us on Sunday, which made his additional earning. In the summer Sunday was a day off. Sometimes my father and the children went to the beach on the Daugava River. He was a good swimmer and trained us to swim. Mama also went with us every now and then.