

Elkhonen Saks With His Cousin Ite Hildesheim



This is my cousin Ite Hildesheim and I in 2000 in Cleveland. My father's older brother, Haim-Leib, who was evacuated from Mozhaysk, lived in Samarkand with his children. He had four sons and two daughters. His wife died before the war. His older son, Josef, married a Russian girl in 1927, broke with his Jewish roots and left the family of his father. The second son Motl was called up to military service, became part of the tank corps and was killed at the front. The youngest son was caught by the war in Belarus, while visiting his relatives, and murdered by the fascists. Only the third son, Elya, and the daughters, Frida and Ite, remained with their father. When Tallinn was liberated [22nd September 1944] my father and me started to think of returning to Estonia. Uncle Haim-Leib tried to persuade us to stay. He was very wise. He stated, 'Stalin's authority is not inspired by God, it comes from the Devil. It cannot stay for long. And we, all of us, will certainly end up in Israel'. His words came true. After the war the Polish nationals received the sanction to return to Poland. Haim-Leib, his son and his daughters managed to get fictitious documents and left with some of their Polish friends. From Poland they quickly got to France. Both daughters married orthodox Jews there and left for the USA. They've been living there ever since - in Cleveland. Frida's husband is a rabbi, her surname is Stern. She has eight children and many grandchildren. Ite's surname became Hildesheim after her marriage, she brought up ten children, but lost her husband early. All her kids are very religious. Ite has thirty-two grandchildren. In 1999 I visited her for the wedding of one of her granddaughters. It was a real Jewish wedding, populous and very cheerful.