

Miriam Klug With Her Brothers, Cousin And Friend



These are my siblings. From left to right: my younger sister Miriam Klug, neighbor girl, whose name I do not recall, my brother Benjamin Klug , cousin Sima and brother Beinish Klug. The picture was made in Ukrmerge in 1937 when I was living separately. I lived and worked in Kaunas. Mother sent me the picture for me not to miss my family.

My parents got married in early 1916. I was born on 10 October 1916. In early 1919 my brother Leibl was born. Then in 1920 a girl was born. She was given a Hebrew name Janina (means dove in Ivrit). Only in five years mother gave birth to a very handsome boy, who was blue-eyed and fair-haired. He was named Benjamin after grandfather, who died several years ago. Then in 1927 Beinish was born and the youngest beautiful baby Miriam was born in 1931.

My parents worked hard and therefore our family was very well-off. Apart from our house, father owned farm land in the village. He hired Lithuanians to work for him and paid them upon harvesting. They had very good relationship. Father paid them well. When the peasants were in Jelva, thee called on us where they could always be accommodated and fed. Father planted wheat, rye, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, beat and the whole land plot for planted. Father planted clover and other feed grains for the cattle. There were several cows in the shed. Their milk was nice and fatty. It was enough for the family and for processed products. Mother made butter, sour cream, cheese and curds. Part of dairy products was sold to regular customers. Mother also bred the poultry. There were a lot of hens, turkeys and geese. Father also had horses, which he took care of with the special care. A Lithuanian man helped father with the husbandry.

My parents were very religious and since childhood plied us with the religious beliefs and dogmas. Every day started with morning hygiene, prayer during which the people were turned to the east. Those who had not prayed, were not given breakfast. All Jewish traditions were strictly observed in our house. Mother usually covered her head with the kerchief, when she went to the synagogue she put a beautiful cover. I am used to kashrut since childhood. There were a lot of dishes in the

kitchen - 12 sets of silverware, sets of dishes and utensils for meat and milk, which were kept separately in two chests.

When I turned 10, father took me to Ukrmerge, where I entered Jewish lyceum. At first lived with my grandparents Jasinskiys', who had moved to Ukrmerge a long time ago. In about two years my parents sold their house and moved to Ukrmerge. It was the time for my younger siblings to study so they decided to be closer to children. Grandparents were elderly and got irritated with children's noise and rattle, so in about two years they moved out.

My younger brother Leibl and sister Yanina also entered lyceum. Though, my parents paid minimum fee for us - 30 litas per month, it was rather large amount for our family. I had studied there for five years and decided that I was adult and it was the time for me to help my parents.

In 1936 when I finished the fifth grade, I was employed and did not come back to the studies. I was employed as a sales assistant in the grocery store. Three years had past and I found out that there was a Jewish kibbutz in Kaunas, where the youth was getting ready for repatriation. I wanted to try a new life and I found life in kibbutz romantic. In summer 1936 I asked for permission from parents, who could not say no to me, and left for Kaunas.

By that time Janina quitted her studies at lyceum and became apprentice of the seamstress in Ukrmerge who lived in front of our house. She started earning money and gave it to the parents. Janina became rather independent. She even went on vacation to Palanga and came to me in Kaunas. Leibl went to rabbi school in Panevezhis. As his grandfather lechiel Aria he was disappointed in the spiritual care as he saw the poverty of rabbi. He even had to wear a coat in summer as his pants were torn. Once he came home and said that he would not come back in eshiva. Leibl started helping father with work. Younger brothers and sister Miriam were still studying in the lyceum.