

Lazar Gurfinkel's Brother Moisey Gurfinkel With His Nanny



My older brother Moisey Gurfinkel and his nanny, a Ukrainian woman. The photo was taken in Khotin in 1916. My older brother was born in 1913. My sister Pesia followed in 1916. I was born in 1924. In 1918 my parents moved into another house. My father bought a big house in one of the main streets - a better location for his business - and he moved his pharmacy into it, too. We lived in that house until World War II. There was a backyard, a shed and a well in the yard. The

pharmacy occupied three rooms, the biggest of which served as the sales area. Powders were prepared in another room, and tinctures and decoctions were made in the third room. There were also storerooms for pharmaceutical utensils. Our family was lodging in four rooms: a living room, a dining room, my parents' bedroom and a children's room. There were also a kitchen, a verandah and a few storerooms in the house. When I was small I slept in my parents' bedroom. Later, me and my brother and sister shared the children's room. There were two beds, a wardrobe, a sink, a table, two chairs and a bookcase in the room. We dined and received guests in the dining room. There was a table, six chairs, a cupboard and a sofa in the room. Our living room was beautifully furnished. There were four windows, carpets and curtains on the windows. There were pictures on the walls, ancient vases and a crystal chandelier. My parents didn't follow the kashrut. We ate all kinds of products, including traditional Jewish food. When my brother was a student in Bucharest he had meals at a restaurant, and when he came home on vacation he always demanded pork chop, the food he was used to. The cook made pork chops for him, and we took advantage of the chance to have pork, too. We didn't observe Sabbath, but we celebrated the major Jewish holidays: Pesach, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Chanukkah, Purim and Sukkot. My parents weren't deeply religious people, but they paid a tribute to religion. Before my brother was to have his bar mitzvah my father hired a teacher to teach my brother Jewish traditions and religion. He taught him Hebrew, prayers and other things. My father hired a teacher for me when I was 10 years old. He taught me Hebrew but translated things into Yiddish for me to understand. I studied the Torah and the Talmud. When I turned 13 my father took me to the synagogue in a cabriolet. I had my bar mitzvah ritual. I said a prayer, and my father treated all community members with traditional vodka, wine and honey cookies. I got tefillin and came of age. My mother arranged a party for me at home. We invited many guests: our family, my parents' friends and my friends.