

Ester Khanson And Her Family



This is our family picture, taken during our vacation in my mother's favorite city Riga. We are sitting in a cafe. To the left is my father Yakov Kljass. I am sitting on the arm of the chair. My elder brother David and my mother Polina Kljass are sitting to my right. The picture was taken in 1923.

My parents got married in 1915. They lived in Tartu. They did not have their own place to live, they rented an apartment. The apartments were always very beautiful. Father dealt with timbering. He had a wholesale warehouse of timber materials: boards, roof timbers etc. In a word, all kinds of timbering materials used in construction could be purchased at my father's warehouse. After getting married, my Mother became a housewife. In 1917 my elder brother David was born, and I was born in 1919. I was called Ester. Only German was spoken at home, and brother and I learned how to speak German. It was our first language.

I had a very happy childhood. The house in which my parents rented an apartment during my childhood was located in a wonderful, large garden. Father loved roses and cultivated them himself. We had a horse and two dogs – the bigger one, the watch dog lived in the yard, and the small one in the apartment.

I remember my brother's and my portraits were hung on the wall in the drawing-room. When David turned four, my mother had an artist make his portrait. David was a very handsome boy. The artist depicted him sitting on the sofa against a blue background. The portrait was made in pale shades. My portrait was made by the artist Rudolf Kreli, a Baltic German. He painted my portrait in the garden. I was holding a blooming branch of an apple tree in my hand and was smiling. Mother always made me a bow from bands that looked like a butterfly. I wore a pretty white dress with flounces with pink trimming. Those pink trimmings were not depicted on the portrait. I was very disappointed as I liked those flounces so much!