

Etl Kaplan



This is my mother, Etl Kaplan, nee Grinberg. This picture was taken in Jurbarkas in 1920 shortly before she was married, at the photo salon Levinas.

My mother was born in 1900 and became motherless at the age of six. Her elder sisters finished lyceum in Kaunas. My mother, who lived with her father, had to go to the Jewish school. In 1915 she finished school and Grandpa was exiled to Siberia. There was no way she could go on with her studies. Mother did house chores and helped her brothers Joseph and Emmanuel, who didn't have their own families yet and worked to support their sisters. In 1919 when Grandfather Morduchai came back, my mother fell in love with my future father.

Grandpa Morduchai was categorically against their marriage. He thought it to be humiliating for my mother to be married to a poor man. Then Moshe and Etl crossed the river in a boat and settled in a neighboring hamlet. They had made preliminary arrangements with the rabbi who made a chuppah for my parents. When Mother's brothers found out about the runaways, they took the boats to chase them, but they were a couple of hours late. It was too late, the rabbi announced: 'Amen', so Etl and Moshe became husband and wife. First, Grandpa Morduchai didn't recognize their marriage, and was hard on my parents. Mother was practically cut off the shilling. If she had made another choice, she would have relied on her father's assistance.