

Frieda Shteinene And Her Family



This is by the road sign in Zagare. In 1998 our friend went to look at the graves of our close people in Zagare and we stopped on our way to make a picture. To the left is my husband Boris Shteinas, then I and my sister Nina Beitler. Uncle Ruvim and my grandson Gedeon, uncle's wife Lyuba, and their son Isaac.

During all my life I worked at school as a Russian language and literature teacher. I was always respected by my colleagues and students. In 1960 my first daughter Rita was born and in 1963 - Lana. We had a good living. Husband made pretty good money and I also had an income. Every year daughters went to pioneer camps in Palanga, we went to sanatoriums using trade union vouchers. We also did not forget about cultural life. We read all novelties, went to the theaters, cinemas. Later husband was given a garden. Then he bought a car and we started traveling all over Lithuania. We also went to Russia. Boris and I had polar characters "ice and fire", but our principles were alike. In businesslike issues husband was the leader, in other day-to-day things I was the head. Mother helped me raise my daughters.

Rita had dreamt to become an investigator since childhood. Being Jewish it was hard for her to enter the university in Vilnius, but she succeeded. Rita managed to become an investigator and now she is in charge of the special department at strict penal camp. From the very beginning, her private life was not a success. She married Jew Erenburg and gave birth to a son Gedeon. They had a bad living, quarreled often. When they divorced, we took our grandson in Siauliai and raised him. Gedeon finished institute and works for Lithuanian representative office of Pigeot company.

My mother died in 1985. I left job straight after that as I had to raise my grandson. My sister Nina also helped me. She also became a teacher. She was a headmaster at school. She remained single. She adores my grandson Gedeon. My younger sister Anna also remained single. She graduated from Vilnius university. She had worked in commerce for many years. Then she worked in private companies. Now Anna is retired. She is living in Vilnius. I am bonded with sisters. We talk over the phone every day and see each other often.

We had a pretty good living during the soviet regime. That is why when Lithuania gained independence and Soviet Union broke up [1991], it was a shock for us. It seemed to us that our life collapsed. There appeared anti-Semites meetings, where communists and the Jews were blamed for all the bad things. It was both in day-to-day life and in press. With time, it eased, and now we find positive things in our independence. Now Jewish community, which was established before the soviet regime, can be revived. My husband Boris became the chairman of Siaulia community. I help him with everything, edit his speeches, reports, make arrangements for the holidays, assists in negotiations with the sponsors. Nina is also with us. Almost every day she comes in the community. I often cook Jewish dishes using my grandmother's recipes. We keep traditions, truly celebrate holidays and try to make a better life for Siaulia Jews in such uneasy times.

Father's brother Ruvim was born in 1914. He was a simple man, always doing the jobs that other people were not willing to. He was a stevedore, a janitor, a cobbler etc. During Great Patriotic War he was in evacuation with grandmother's family. When he came back in Lithuania, he married Jewish Pole Lyuba, who came back from Dachau. Ruvim and Lyuba had a son Isaac. He is currently living in Israel with his family. He died six years ago, several months before his wife's death.