

The Kupferman Family



This is a photo of my family, taken in Horodenka in 1921 or 1922. In the first row from the left: my aunt Frajda Wajcman, nee Kupferman, my grandmother Menia Kupferman, nee Gutman, my grandfather Berl Kupferman, my aunt Zelda Kupferman, the wife of Frojme, the eldest son of Menia and Berl. In the second row from the left: my uncle Szlojme Kupferman, my aunt Cypora Kupferman, my mother Chaja Klara Szwach, nee Kupferman, my father Josif Szlojme Szwach, my aunt Sara Oxhorn, nee Kupferman and my uncle Frojme. I remember my grandparents on my mother's side very well, because until I was six I was brought up by them. My granddad was called Berl Kupferman. Kupferman is like Miedzinski [the stem of both the Jewish and the Polish names means copper]. Berl Kupferman came from a village called Kolanki, between Horodenka and Zaleszczyki. He was a furrier. He was short, with a beard, a man of exceptional goodness and very proud - that's how I remember him. I think my grandmother was born in the 1870s, and I think she was from Horodenka. Granddad married into Horodenka, you see. They had six children: two sons and four daughters. Granddad Berl took part in World War I; he was a soldier in the Austrian army. He was on the Italian front when they used gas bombs, and he partially lost his sight. And then after the war he got diabetes and went blind altogether. But that didn't stop him being a shammash in a prayer house. Mama always told us how at 5.00 or 5.30 in the morning, winter or summer, he would walk the several hundred meters with his stick to the prayer house and clean and tidy up there. And he would walk past our windows, and my mother, who on Fridays always got up in the early morning hours to bake bread for the whole week, would look out of the window and by the light of the streetlamp would see Granddad trudging, often through the snow, and feeling the way with his stick. Sometimes he would fall into the ditch somewhere along the way - there were ditches in our town because there wasn't a sewage system - and then Mama would have to dash out to help him out of the ditch and show him the way. Granddad Berl lived with Grandma Menia and their youngest daughter, who was called Frajda. Frajda was born in 1914. She was a tailor. She got married in 1939 or 1940, I think, to Hersz Wajcman. Aunt Frydzia, that's what we called her, had her own Singer sewing machine. Their middle daughter, Sara, born in 1902 or 1903, emigrated in the early 1920s to the United States. There she married Natan Oxhorn, and they

basically spent their whole lives there, had children, and grandchildren - an American family. My mama, Chaja Klara, was born in 1900. And then there was a fourth daughter, called Cypora, who some time in the mid-1920s emigrated to Uruguay. We kept in touch with her and Aunt Sara during the war. The oldest son was called Frojm and was a tailor, and the youngest son, the youngest child in the family, was called Szlojme and was a tailor too. Frojm and Szlojme lived in Horodenka with their families. I knew them all personally; we saw each other every day.