

Etta Ferdmann And Her Family



From left to right, sitting at the bench is Mr. Sinder, the first husband of my father's sister Zelda, my cousin Gita Sinder, Zelda's daughter, Mira Ferdmann, and Samuel Ferdmann. 2nd row: my father's elder sister Zelda Sinder, his eldest brother Benchi Ferdmann, my father Gessel Ferdmann, his brother Mikhail Ferdmann and my mother Zinaida Ferdmann. The picture was taken in Narva in 1936.

My parents got married in 1933. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a rabbi and chuppah. My grandmother Yachna lived in a large, six-room apartment with her numerous children. The family was clustered together – all my grandmother's children were living there with their spouses and children. My parents also settled in that apartment after their wedding. Each family had a separate room. The only single person was my father's brother Mikhail. The whole family had meals together at a huge table. We were very friendly. Our family spoke to me in Yiddish or Estonian. My parents spoke either Russian or Yiddish. During family reunions with Grandmother, only Yiddish was spoken.

Father's sister Zelda married a Jew from Narva called Sinder. Their daughter Gita was born in 1932. Father's brother Samuel married a Jewish girl from Riga. Her name was Mira. In 1937 their son Chaim Mendle was born. He was named after Grandfather. His secular name was Charvie. He was a wonderful boy. I was born in 1934 and named Etta after Grandmother.

Sabbath was marked at home. On Friday festive food was cooked, challot were baked. Grandmother watched the process for things to be done properly. She ruled the big family. Friday night we were supposed to get together in the drawing room. Grandmother lit candles and read prayers, then everybody sat down at the table. We took a piece of challah, dipped it in salt and ate it. After that we started eating other meals.

We marked all Jewish holidays; there was a synagogue in Narva and on holidays all of us went there with Grandmother. I do not remember if all the children went there on every holiday. For some reason I remember Rosh Hashanah. On that day my parents took me to the synagogue. I

liked it a lot, and I was looking forward to this holiday.