

**The following part was written by Erica Goldenberg, a descendant of Shlomo Zalman Braun (daughter of Rozsi Bressler, born Braun).**



My Grandparents Samuel Chayem Braun and his wife Esther (Ethel) Braun nee Szmuck  
They had 5 children: Margit, Hersu, Ilona, Rozsi and Andor.



Margit Braun (Rifkele)

Margit was a fine lady; exceptionally beautiful, talented and kind. She was a well known, respected and successful cosmetologist.



Hersu (Erno) Braun



My Mom's favorite brother  
Andi-Mordechai Braun  
My son Simon is named after him,  
Simon Andy.



Sisters: from right Rozsi (Ruchele) and Ilona (Ilush) Braun

## **Rozsi Bressler, born Braun - Ruchele – Tachika and Family**

**By: Erica Goldenberg (Elizabeth), Rozsi's daughter (17 Nov. 2004)**

### **Rozsi – Ruchele – Bressler or Tachika**

My Mother Rozsi Bressler was born on August 15 1914 in the town of Beregszasz in Karpatalja, Hungary. Her nickname is Tachika. Her parents were Samuel Braun -Shmil Chayem - from Beregszasz and Eszter (Ethel) Braun nee Szmuck from Vishk. Soon after she was born, WWI broke out and her father joined the army as a soldier and fought on the front.

My Mother was the 4-th one of five children. Her oldest sister was Margit – Rifkele- born in 1907. The second child was my uncle Hershu – Tzvi – Erno (1908-1991). The third one was Ilona (Ilush) – Feigele born in April 1913; my mother was the 4-th one; and the 5-th and the youngest and most talented one – my Mom's favorite brother was – Andy Mordechai – born in 1916. The Brauns had a happy life. They had a big family and many friends. The main language spoken at home was Hungarian but they also spoke Yiddish.

The house where my mother grew up was on Attila Street, a prestigious neighborhood. The house was very imposing with a large garden full of fruit trees and flowers, leading down to the river Verke. The river was a man-made canal, built to beautify the town. The river was flowing through the center of the town. There were several bridges going over the Verke. My Mother and all of her siblings spent many happy carefree summers swimming and playing in the Verke. One of her favorite pastimes was rowing a small boat - a sandoline – canoe, in the Verke. In the winter the river froze and it was used as a skating rink. While skating, she fell twice through the ice, but she just shrugged it off. I myself also learned to swim in the Verke when I was visiting my uncle on vacation. My uncle Hershu and his family lived in the family house until they immigrated to the US in 1976.

My Mother's description would not be accurate or complete without mentioning her passion for books and her love for swimming. She is an avid reader: She reads in three languages: Hungarian, English and Russian. She enjoys books, magazines, newspapers. She reads the classics, modern writers, adventures, love stories - you name it - she reads it. Her life revolves around her family, reading and swimming.

To this day my Mom loves water sports; she is still a good swimmer. For the past 25 years she goes swimming 3 times a week in the Boro Park Y in Brooklyn, rain or shine. She takes prides of being a good swimmer. She is popular there among the young and the old. When she goes on vacation she goes on the pedal boat.

## **How Tachika saved the Torah**

When Beregszasz was occupied by the Nazis the Jews had to wear the yellow star. Rumors were going around that the Jews would be sent away, but the location was top secret and they did not know about the concentration camps. They wanted to save the Torah.

One day her cousin Margit Feldman came over and suggested that they make arrangements with the Catholic Priest to hide the Torah. My Mother knew the Priest well because he was a customer in the grocery where she worked at that time. The church was near the bridge across the street from the Uri Casino.

Together they went to the priest's house to discuss the idea. The Priest agreed and told them to bring the Torah at dusk. Rabbi Hirsh was very grateful. The next day he packed six Torah scrolls into large bags and at dusk, risking being arrested, Tachika and Margit brought the sacred scrolls over to the Priest. The priest hid the Torahs in the Catholic Church and protected them though WWII. After the war he returned them unharmed to the Jews.

## **1944, as told by Tachika**

*“The nazis came into our house in Beregszasz and rudely ordered us to leave our belongings and the house and to move into the Ghetto. The Ghetto was in the brick factory. In the Ghetto we heard shots and we were threatened to be shot every day. We had to turn in all of our money and jewelry to stay alive. Starvation started in the Ghetto.*

*Within four weeks they forced us into cattle trains. The train had no seats, no toilets, no water, and no food. In a few days we arrived to Auschwitz. There they took our minimal necessary luggage away.*

*In Auschwitz we learned that no one left from there alive.*

*When we arrived to Auschwitz the chimney was smoking and the air was permeated with the odor of burning hair and flesh.*

*As soon as we got out of the train, Mengerle stood there selecting. He sent my Mother and Margit who was pregnant to the left. Despite the fact that they asked the Doctors to stay, Amalka my Aunt who was a doctor, (Dr. Amalia Braun) went to the left on her own to help Margit deliver the baby. Ilush was sent to the right but she went with Mamuka (her Mother, Eszter) anyway. Mengerle told me “Do geist nach rechts” – “You go to the right” but I told him in German that my family went to the left and I wanted to be with them. He pushed my left shoulder and said, “You go to the right. You’ll meet with them soon”. That was the last time I saw my family ever.*

*The second day in Auschwitz we stood “Tzel Apel” (headcount). The Capo was a Slovakian woman from Szombathely – Rimovska Sobota. I asked her about a man from the same town whom I had been dating. In response, the Capo pointed to the chimney of the crematorium and said: “Do you see that chimney? He’s there. And you’ll be there too”.*

*At night I heard the prayer "Shma Yisrael" from the gas chambers. In the morning I smelled the odor of burning hair and bones.*

*The camp was fenced with live electric wire. Whoever touched the wire died. They shaved off everybody's hair.*

*During the "tzet apel" there were selections. The obersturmführer pointed to weaker looking people and they were taken to the gas chambers.*

*I was in the first transport to leave Auschwitz alive. I was taken to camps in Langenbilow, Parshnitz and Gorlitz. In Parshnitz I worked in an army supply factory and in Langenbilow I worked in a shpinery; then I worked with bombs.*

*I was always aching physically and emotionally. We often had to walk long distances in the snow. A lot of people did not have shoes. Those who did not have the strength to walk were shot. There were many dead bodies on the road. When we went to Parshnirz, a girl recognized her brother in the man's camp on the ground floor. She attempted to give him a piece of bread. They were noticed by camp authorities and both of them were shot in the head.*

*While in the concentration camp, I was in constant fear of death, constant hunger, cold, physical pain and humiliation.*

*I was liberated in on May 9, 1945 by the Russians."*

## **After the war**

After the war my Mother went back to the family house in Beregszasz where she met her only surviving brother Hershu and his wife Manci. The house was ransacked but they found furniture and a few of my Grandfathers manuscripts. They had to start their lives all over again.

Later she got married to Simon Bressler of Velky Berezny and they had one daughter - me - Erica. My Father was a fine, soft-spoken, cultured gentleman. My parents lived in peace and harmony, treating each other with dignity and respect. My Father passed away at the age of 75 in November 1978 after living a short but happy 16 month in Brooklyn, New York. My Father was a real "Mensch".

We lived in the town of Szöllös or Vinogradovo, 30 km from Beregszasz in the former SU. Near Szöllös was the river Tisza and the Black Mountain. We had a large garden full of fruit trees and grapes. My parents produced wine privately as a side business and stored the barrels in our wine cellar. This was done very discretely because the Soviet Union did not allow operating private businesses officially.

I studied in the Polytechnic Institute of Lvov and graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1974. In 1977 we emigrated to the US. Here I have a carrier in IT for Healthcare. We live in Brooklyn NY. I got married and have three beautiful children who make me proud. All three of my children went to the Yeshivah of Flatbush. My daughter Janet Miriam, 25 is a Nutritionist. She is married to Avi Litwack, a Graphic Artist. Janet

is finishing the graduate program at NYU. My son, Simon's middle name is Andy after Andi Braun, my Mother's youngest brother. Simon is 22. He graduated from Binghamton University, school of Management with an MIS major. My youngest child Victoria is 14. Her Hebrew name is Mindy after Dr. Amalia Braun whose Hebrew name was Mindl. Vicky is a high school student in the Yeshiva of Flatbush. She plays violin and is on the swim team. Her hobby is ancient cultures.

Like her father, my mother is a generous person, always giving gifts to her grandchildren and sending donations to the blind and the needy.

## **Hershu Braun, my Uncle Erno bachi – as told by his sister Rozsi and daughter Madga**

Hershu was the second child in the family. He was the oldest boy. He was tall and good-looking. When he finished school, he went to Gymnasium and later joined his Father's business of wine making. Hershu was a Zionist. When he was young he went to Israel; he stayed there for about a year, working at the pardes, the orange groves. One day his supervisor acted like a slave driver; he came by on a horse told them to work faster and faster and he yelled and cursed and insulted Hershu. In response to the insult, Hershu punched the supervisor in the face. He got revenge but that was the end of his job.

When he returned to Beregszasz he got married. He married Mancsi Oberlander from Szolyva.

Before the war Hershu was serving in the Hungarian Army in the Ukraine. He was driving a big truck delivering food to the Army. When he was passing by Beregszasz he stopped by to visit and dropped off bread.

After he was discharged from the army he got another summons, but by that time Hungary was on Germany's side in the war and he did not want to serve and went into hiding in Hungary. He was there with his cousins Yaki and Layosh, both of whom went to Israel when the war was over. They were hiding in houses and there was nothing to eat. They found a sack of dried beans that were thrown out because they were very old. They soaked the beans for several days and ate them for a long time. This saved them from starvation. After many hardships Hershu was able to get under Raoul Wallenberg's protection through the Swiss Consulate.

Hershu was liberated before Passover and went home. A few Jews were already home. Hershu organized with others baking of matzo for Passover. The oven was still intact in the backyard of the big synagogue. They also opened a kitchen to feed everyone who came home from the war.

When Mancsi was liberated by the Russian soldiers she was taken to a hospital in Slovakia where they fed her and cleaned her from lice. After that they were taken to a Red Cross center where they had a list showing who survived. She found Hershu's name on the list and she went back to Beregszasz. This was before Passover and they were already baking matza.



Manci's stories were also fascinating. Almost at the end of the war when the Germans already knew they would lose, they evacuated the camp and the women had to walk day and night from the camps, not knowing where they were going. They were tired, thirsty and hungry. If someone fell the Germans shot him or her. Manci and her friends – Helenke Neni, Weiss Yoshka's Mother and Manci's 3 nieces – Lolly, Bobby and Manyi - pinned each others dresses together with safety pins to pull each other so they would not fall. The Russian airforce was flying above their heads. The German soldiers started to disappear one by one – they ran to hide - until there were no German soldiers around them. And they finally were free.

Both Hershu and Manci survived the war and came back to the family house. They had a baby girl Evike in 1946. She got sick with meningitis and they tried hard to get penicillin but could not and the baby passed away. In 1947 they had another baby girl, my cousin Magda. Hershu had a good job in the collective farm – he was managing the grain storage.

Privately he continued producing and selling wine, the trade he learned from his Father. Hershu bachi had a motorcycle and he visited us often. Our families were very close, visiting each other every weekend. They worked hard and did their best to create a good and happy life for Magda. He continued supporting the needy in his father's tradition, giving out wine for Passover and sacks of potatoes.

Magda is a talented music teacher. She plays the piano. She married Jerry – Gena – Green in 1968. They emigrated to the US in 1975. Magda has two children. Her daughter Vicky was born in 1969. Vicky lives in Scottsdale Arizona, with her husband Anthony Zacchini and their two beautiful sons. Magda's son Steven – Shmuel Chayim – is named after my Grandfather. Steven graduated from NYU and is currently enrolled in the Masters program in Columbia University.

## **Margit - Reifkele Braun**

Margit was the firstborn. She was a beautiful, refined lady, cultured and elegant. You could not have painted a more beautiful picture than she was. She was a cosmetitian; she had a salon in the same building where Dr. Amalia Braun had her office. She had the most modern equipment, epil, steam, and creams. The ladies of Beregszasz came to Margit to beautify themselves. She had aristocratic hands, long fingers and a light hand. Margit got married and moved to Budapest. Before she moved she trained her younger sister Ilush (Ilona) in cosmetology and she continued in the business.

Just before the Jews of Beregszasz were taken to the ghetto, Margit came home from Budapest to deliver her baby. She was taken to the Beregszasz ghetto and subsequently into Auschwitz with the rest of the Braun family. In Auschwitz she was sent to the left by Mengerle because she was pregnant. At the same time they announced that the Dr.'s have to sign up but Dr. Amalia Braun did not sign up because she wanted to be with her niece to help her deliver the baby. Their lives ended in Auschwitz.

## **Andi - Mordechai Braun**

Andi was the youngest child in the family and everyone's favorite. He finished the Gymnasium and continued his studies as a student in the University of Prague. He was happy and successful and liked to joke around. He was the family's pride and joy. As a student Andi played small roles in movies as an extra in Prague in the film studio. Andy graduated as an Engineer from the University of Prague. His life ended in Theresienstadt by the brutality of the Nazis. In honor of Andi, my son's middle name is Andy.

## **Ilush - Feigele Braun**

Ilush was a beautiful girl. She learned the cosmetology business from her sister Margit and she continued in business after Margit got married. She was dating a lawyer. But he had to go to the front. At first he lost his right arm, later he was killed. Ilush died in Auschwitz. She was selected to go to the right but she chose to go to the left with her mother.

## **Samuel - Chayem Braun, Rozsi's father, son of Shlomo Zalman Braun**

Samuel Braun was an extraordinary person. He succeeded in everything he did. He was a great father, a successful businessmen, a talented artist, a writer, inventor and always ready to extend a helping hand to the needy.

The Braun family was financially well off, intelligent, respected and belonged to the top tier of Beregszasz' Jewish population.

Samuel Brown was an orthodox person; he went to the synagogue twice a day.

Before he was married, he was among the "cream of the crop". He hung out in the Royal coffeehouse with his friends. He owned the very first camera in Beregszasz and he was popular within the young crowd. A then famous Hungarian movie star who was born in Beregszasz and lived in Budapest- Fedak Shari - mentioned in her memoirs that the first amateur picture of her was taken by Braun Samuel and that they played cards under the bridge. She also wrote that Braun Samuel was once walking home from the synagogue and the wind blew his hat off and she picked it up and ran away with it. The "Szinhasz Elet" "Theatre life" published installments of this book. When the Hungarians took over again Fedak Shari visited Beregszasz - she was advertised all over the town - she wanted to meet with Samuel but my grandfather refused because he found out that Fedak Shari became a nazi sympathizer.

Samuel was a talented artist. He won a full scholarship from the Hungarian Royal Government to study art, but his father, Shlomo Zalman Braun, an orthodox (but not Chassidic) man, did not permit him to study art. He said, "I have five sons. If the oldest will become a goy (the assumption was that if he studies art in Budapest he would assimilate) then all of my sons would be goyim." Even though he was not allowed to study art, he painted as an amateur. One of his paintings was a memorial in honor of the



Beregszaszi victims of WWI. This picture was displayed in the big Synagogue's conference hall in Beregszasz until the Holocaust. The picture is published in the Beregszaszi book.

Samuel became a very successful businessman: he was a wine gross dealer. He owned acres of land on the mountains outside Beregszasz and produced wine. He also had a very lucrative alcohol brewery in 11 locations in Bergszasz and in the surrounding region. Another one of his businesses was a bus route from Szerednye to Ungvar (Uzsgorod) and Munkach.

Samuel was a respected member of the community who possessed a lot of common sense and helped the needy. He helped them financially as well as with sound advice. He helped generously even those people who were dignified and were embarrassed to ask; so my grandfather discretely brought his donation to their homes. . For Pessach he made an extra barrel of wine to donate to those who could not afford to pay for it. People came to him from Beregszasz and from surrounding villages. In those times people came with their own demizhons (vessels). Shmil Chayem kept extra demozhons in his wine cellar and gave it out filled up with Passover wine. He never refused anyone who asked. When someone came without a demizhon he joked "Did you drink the demizhon too?" and gave him a new one.

He was a happy person and had a great sense of humor. Both of his sons - Hershu and Andi - were much taller than him. When they went somewhere together, his acquaintences he met on the street were cracking jokes "Mr. Braun, are these two boys yours?" and he replied "I don't know but my wife is their Mother, they grew up in my house, they carry my name and they eat my bread".

Samuel worked on many projects. He wrote plays for the Jewish Theatre. He invented an improved petroleum lamp. He patented the improvement of alcohol production. In recognition he received the Palanx Lexicon, which was the most complete encyclopedia in Hungary at that time. He wrote a hypothesis about crude oil which was published in a scientific magazine. He corresponded about his technological inventions and improvement with various professors, among them with Thomas Alva Edison.

When they were on the train to Auschwitz, the people were thirsty and hysterical. Samuel Braun went to talk with the officials and told them the people need water. The train was stopping and they allowed him to exit the train and he brought two buckets of water and a cup. He said to the people "Calm down. Everyone will get water". He gave the first cup of water to his daughter Ruchele and then to the rest of his family and to everyone else in the wagon. He advised to his family to eat, drink and watch out for their health and for general good appearance. Samuel Braun's life ended in Auschwitz.

Years after the war, my Mother met with two people who remembered Shmil Chayem. One of them was Mr. Kosher who used to work in his wine cellar. He said to my Mother "Your Father was the most honest person in the world".

The other one was an understudy of Mr. Voltzovich, my Grandfathers tailor. The understudy used to deliver the suits to my Grandfather and he said that Mr. Braun was the most generous tipper.

## **Shlomo - Zalman Braun, my Mother's grandfather**

Before Shlomo Zalman Braun got married, he was a yeshiva bocher in Pozsony - Bratyslava in Czechoslovakia. Then he became a wine dealer. He often talked about his travels to Italy and about the delicious Matthias Herring he had there. When we went to Italy in 1977 as part of our emigration, my mother bought Matyas herring too, hoping to recreate the spirit.

He had a pipe collection. One of them was a black shiny one made of Ebony wood. When he died, my Mother gave it as a gift to Shoenfeld bachi.

The last 10 years of his life Shlomo Zalman Braun, my great grandfather, lived with his son Samuel's family. He often offered to help his grandchildren with math and also asked Hershu and Andy in Yiddish "Kenste shoy'n der Latin?" (Do you already know the Latin?), when they were students in the Gymnasium. He was very proud of the achievements of his daughter Dr. Amalia Braun because she knew Latin so well that she won 10 gold Crowns in a Latin contest.

## **Dr. Amalia Braun, Mindl, daughter of Shlomo - Zalman Braun**

My Mother's Aunt, Dr. Amalia Braun was the first female Doctor in Karpatalja. She was a great pride to her family and a role model for her nieces and nephews. She was held in high esteem by all who knew her. My youngest daughter Victoria is named in Hebrew after her as Mindy.

Dr. Amalia Braun had a very successful practice. Her office was in the palace (Mehesh Palota). She did a lot of charity care. When she visited a poor patient not only she did not accept money for her services but she left for them money for chicken soup.

She was a delegate to Basel, Switzerland, to the Zionist Conference. She was also the math tutor.

Many years later, in the 1990s an interesting episode happened in New York. I was working in the NYU Medical Center in IT. I was managing an Imaging System and many doctors and hospital employees stopped by my office for a demo. Once Dr. Howard Levitt, a cardiologist stopped by. After the demo he was curious to know where I was from because of my accent. I told him I was Karpathian. He said he recognized my accent because his Mom came from Beregszasz. He proceeded to tell me that his Mom was a Shpitz girl and they had a big house in the center of the town. I told him my Mom was also from Beregszasz, a Braun girl. He asked if I ever heard about Dr. Amalia Braun. We looked at each other in disbelief. I told him that she was my Mom's Aunt and that my daughter, whose picture was displayed in my office was named after her. It turned out that when Amalia established her private practice, her first office was in the Shpitz house. The Shpitzes were very proud of this. Soon after that Dr. Levitt's Mom came to meet me in the NYU. A very pleasant lady, herself a cosmetologist, we had coffee together. She reminisced about the old times in Beregszasz; also told me that Margit was her role model – this is why she also became a cosmetologist.

## **Childhood stories told by my mother, Rozsi**

### **When I was born:**

“I was born during WW I. My father was already on the front fighting on the Hungarian side in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. They were not too happy with my birth – I was the third girl – not much joy. My mother would’ve rather had a boy although she already had one boy. To top everything off, I was born dead. But the midwife dunked me in warm and cold water to give a jumpstart to my heart and it worked. Every year when I took the “Shalach Manot” to the midwife, she told me the story over and over again. She said “You can thank me for saving your life because you were born dead”. And I told her every time “You should’ve not worked so hard” She said “You are ungrateful”.

My Mother nursed me for 4 month but after that her milk dried out and that was a very big problem in 1914. In those times there was no baby food or Similac, nor pampers. They fed me with milk, potatoes and farina. But I cried a lot. At this time my parents still lived in a rented house by Grunfeld bachi but after the war my Apuka (my Father) bought our house on Atilla street.

When I was a bigger girl and I visited Grufeld bachi and went shopping to his store, he asked me “Can you still cry?”

I was a good girl and listened to my parents. I knew that Apuka always loved me and protected me; he did not want to hear Mamuka reprimanding me for being careless and sloppy and for being the first one to rip the pantyhose. He protected me from my Mamuka, who lectured and me called me “futri Kati” and careless. Yet my Mother said that of all of her 5 children she wants to stay with me when she gets old. But she did not get old.

### **About Esther Szmuck – Rozsi’s mother:**

Esther was only 15.5 years old when she got married to Samuel Braun. It was love. The wedding was in January and she turned 16 in May. She had a special dispensation that allowed her to get married. She had long beautiful hair reaching her waist. Cutting the bride’s hair was a big mitzvah and the morning after the wedding the women started to cut her hair. She felt that this was brutal. She felt that they are cutting out a piece from her flesh not just from her hair. Then she put on the sheitle – mostly to please her own father - Meyer Elye Szmuck of Vishk, originally from Sziget.

She did not like the sheitle, she called it “szaroka” not “paroka” in Hungarian and said “the girl who cuts her hair is crazy”. At home she covered her head with a scarf and on the street she alternated between the sheitle and a small hat.

### **The lost sheitle:**

One day Mamuka sent Andi to pick up her sheitle from the sheitlemaker. He was a young kid and on his way home he lost the sheitle. Fortunately my cousin Piri Eisikovich, (Piri Knauer) was walking on the street and found the sheitle; she recognized it as Esther’s sheitle and brought it home.

### **The little fur jacket:**

As a young woman, Esther had a little fur jacket. Being dignified, she wore it for a while and after a while she felt it was worn out and she sold it to Mrs. Goyosh. Mrs. Goyosh (Goyosh-ne) wore the fur jacket for an astonishing 15 years after that. After that there was a family joke about worn-out (shnoss) clothes “I look in this dress as “shnoss” as Goyosh-ne in the fur jacket”.

### **The stolen pocketbook:**

As a young woman, Esther went to the market to buy a goose. When she was ready to pay she realized that only the handle of her purse was still in her hand, but the bag itself has been cut off, stolen by pickpockets.

### **The turkey:**

Passover was coming. The family was big: Five children, my Grandfather lived with us and my Aunt Amalka, the Doctor was always invited so we had at least 12 people for Seder. In preparation, Mamuka bought a big turkey - 10 kg - for Passover. But she did not want to let it out to the yard out of fear that the turkey would walk away. She decided to put the turkey up on the attic. You could walk up to the attic from the pantry (shpeiz), so it was a safe place. They fed him with corn and water. One day the turkey disappeared from the attic. We could not imagine where he went and how.

We lived across the street from the priest and the priest's wife kept turkeys in her yard. After a few days of the turkeys disappearance, the priest's wife came over and asked “Mrs. Braun, did you by any chance have a turkey? Because there is a new turkey in my yard, which came to court my chickens”. She said, she had a turkey that disappeared from the attic three days ago. Mamuka went over to the priest's house and recognized our big turkey and brought it home. Only after that did they discover how the turkey left: he flew out the attic window and walked across the street to be among the other turkeys.

### **The broken cup:**

When I was a child I broke a lot of china. This happened when I was about 10 or 11. The maid was off on Christmas vacation and the school was closed too and the children had to help out with the household chores. The chore assigned to Rozsi was to wash the dairy dishes after breakfast. They had very pretty cups, wider on the bottom and narrower on the top decorated with flowers. She washed and dried the cups and hang them up on her finger to take them to the china closet. But the cups fell and broke – most of them except one. She was terrified of what her Mother would say and that she would be punished. Apuka, her father came out into the kitchen and just asked “Is there one left?” She said yes. He gave her money and told her to go to Shoenfeld's store and buy identical cups even more than what they had before. She took the last cup as a sample to show to Mr. Shoenfeld and luckily he still had the same exact design. She came back with the replacement cups just in time before Mamuka came home. Her mom never found out about the broken cups.

Everyone in the family knew she breaks things often. But her chore was always drying the glasses. She would have like sweeping the floor more, but that job was assigned to Ilush.

### **\$100:**

It was the beginning of the school year when I was in second year of Polgari (girls school) - equivalent to 6<sup>th</sup> grade now. And it was time to go buy books for school. Apuka gave my 100 Check Crowns - which was a lot of money at that time – and he asked me to stop by Kain bachi – the wholesale store next door to the bookstore and buy half a kg of roasted coffee beans. I did exactly as he said and when I wanted to pay for coffee, I could not find the money. I lost the 100 Crown bill! I was very upset I knew I would get punished but I had to go home any way. No books, no coffee, no money. I was halfway home when I met with Apuka – he was talking with his cousin Morthy, Dr.Shlomovich's brother, the son of Mime Rifke. I told him I lost the money and I could not buy anything and I cried. He did not say one word, just reached into his pocket, took out another 100 Crown bill and said "Go buy everything and don't say a word to your mother". This time also I avoided the punishment.

### **Errands and chores:**

"My parent sent me on errands all the time: To exchange the shoes for a bigger size, to pick up the sheitle from the sheitlemaker, to the shoemaker. In those times there was no phone. Also Mamuka took me along when the goose became treif and they went to sell the goose to the gentiles.

And one day when the maid was not there I offered to grind the potatoes for kugel. That was a hard job and I cut my hand several times. So my Mother told me in reward I would get the biggest piece of kugel.

### **Shabbes:**

Every Friday we took the cholent and the kugel to the baker's oven. Then, on Shabbos lunch the baker's helper brought it home in time for the family to enjoy. The kugel was especially delicious.

### **Shoes:**

My mother was a very vain woman. She had big feet and she would not want her children to have big feet. So she bought small shoes, thinking their feet would not grow. She bought for me new shoes for Shavout. I told her the shoes hurt, but she said they would stretch. So when I went to school, my feet hurt and I took the shoes off and put them under my desk. When it was time to go home, I could not put the shoes back on. So I was walking home barefoot, bringing the shoes in my hand. I met with Apuka who was also on his way home and he asked me why was I barefoot. When I told him he said. "After dinner you come with me to Hamburg's shoe store and I'll buy for you shoes in which you can run and jump". He took me to Hamburg's and bought for me the most expensive shoes made from the softest leather with a strap across the foot. They were so comfortable that ever since that time I don't wear small shoes.

### **Buying shoes with my mother:**

My mother was vain. She felt that she would look more beautiful if she wears smaller shoes. So one day we went shoe-shopping together. My mother was trying on shoes. She tried on several pairs and at the end she picked two pairs but a small size. She said "Ruchele, while I put on my shoes, you go pay for them". I went to pay and told the sales lady to pack the bigger size because I did not want Mamuka's feet to hurt. When we came home she tried them on again without checking the size and said "You see Ruchele, you wanted to me to buy the bigger size, but even the smaller size is very comfortable". I stayed as quiet as a fish but I could barely contain my laughing. I told my father what went on and he later joked with my mother: "Esther, from now on you would always go with Ruchele shoe-shopping".

### **Her majesty's mirror:**

There was a tall mirror in the dining room but the bottom was decorated with potted plants so you could not see your feet in the mirror. My mother dressed up, being so vain, she was checking her reflection in the mirror. Andi knew she could not see her feet so he brought for her a footstool and said jokingly: "Your majesty here is the footstool".

### **Pantyhose:**

My mother bought for us pantyhose. Mine ripped the fastest. So she was reprimanding me: you are careless, you rip everything first. My father did not like hearing the lecture and said: "If your mother goes panty-hose shopping, I'll give you money and you buy yourself and extra pair of the same kind so I would never hear that you ripped them first."

### **Plans gone bad sneaking out to swim naked:**

I was less than 5 years old and my friend Manci Ulvovich came over to play. We did not know what to play so I suggested "Let's go swim". She said, OK, but I don't have my swimsuit here. I noticed that the fresh laundry was hanging in the backyard and among them there were aprons/smocks that covered the front and the straps crossed in the back. No back. I said we'll put on an apron. She said, OK, but we'll be punished if our panties get wet. So I said: "we'll take our panties off". We agreed on that and we took the aprons off of the line and started heading out to the river. At that very moment Mamuka came out and asked "Why did you take the aprons off of the line?". We answered "We are going to swim". "No, you are not swimming without supervision". That was the end of our plans.

**Coming home late:**

Once Andi and I went very far with the canoe – all the way to the beach and we came back at dusk. We knew we were late and our parents worried for us so we were rowing very fast; we were afraid to get into trouble. By the time we came home, the table was already set for the evening meal with huge slices of bread and vegetables and dairy soup. But Apuka was quick to save the situation and he said “You are probably very hungry; sit down and eat”. With these words he saved the situation again as always.

**Grapes:**

We stored grapes for the winter in the pantry. The pantry had a tall ceiling; it also had steps to the attic. The grapes were hanging from the beams high up on the ceiling. In order to take them off you had to bring in the big ladder. But Andi and I figured out a way to get grapes without the ladder. When no one was home, I went up on the steps that lead to the attic and Andi was holding the pantry door and I climbed up on the top of the door and picked grapes.

After a while Mamuka noticed that “It’s been a long time that we had to bring in the tall ladder, but there are fewer and fewer grapes.” And Apuka said “It looks like our children can fly”.