

Hari Finchelstein At Work



This is Hari Finchelstein, the cadet, my youngest brother. Hari was born in 1925. I believe this photograph was taken when he started working at the leather dressing machine; the photograph was probably taken immediately after the war.

My mother was a housewife, she raised 9 children. I don't remember my mother ever going to bed or waking up at the same time as we did. We always went to bed and she stayed up longer, for she still had chores to do. In the morning she got up long before us in order to get us ready for school or work. We always found her where we left her, about the house, doing the chores. And let us not forget that washing machines or other possibilities of making life easier didn't exist in those days. She washed by hand, we didn't even have running water. Sometimes, when the material situation of our household was better, mother used to hire a woman to do the laundry. She collected the dirty laundry during a week or two and, if she managed to hire a woman to help her with the laundry, they washed all the laundry and stretched it out to dry in the courtyard. All the courtyards were full of washed laundry. This was during summer, it was harder during winter, when we strung the laundry to dry inside the house. Mother was a very hard-working woman. It was only when the girls were a bit older and could take over some of the household chores, that my father started taking my mother out for a walk, or to the park once in a while during summer. That's how it was in all households, not only in our home. She was always cooking, back then people ate cooked food at lunch and at dinnertime. Young people nowadays can't even imagine the kind of life that our mothers led. Father worked from dawn to dusk so that he could support the entire family.

The youngest brother, Hari, was a leather dresser, he made shoe uppers, formerly there were no shoe factories. Then the shoemakers came, took the shoe uppers and pulled them over shoe-lasts, thus making footwear. With the exception of Elisa and Isel who died an untimely death, all other brothers emigrated to Israel. Only I stayed here. My brothers and sisters had children. I have nephews and nieces from them and we are on very good terms with them at present. They are like my own children. Had I had children of my own, I don't know if they would have showed me so much respect as these nephews and nieces do. Both those from my side of the family and those from my wife's side. Not a week goes by without them calling us on the phone and asking right

away if I need anything. And when I go to Israel, they fight over who should accommodate me.