

Samuel Eiferman With Schoolmates



This photo was taken in May or June 1940, before the Russians arrived. It shows all the students and teachers of the school in Sipot. One year later, all these people would become a memory to me. One of the teachers is sitting to the right, in the front row; his name was Cozma. Another teacher, Mr. Lefter, is standing in the middle of the second row. I forgot the name of the female teacher. Mr. Lefter is wearing a military uniform because he was a reservist and he was conducting "pre-military" training with the boys aged 18-19.

My cousin Sally is in the front row, between Cozma and the female teacher. I am standing behind her. My cousin Coca is to the left, higher up. I circled my position and Sally's. As you can see, I was the only one wearing a cap. The other boys wore hats or fur hats. This was a pretty good indication of the material situation of one's family. The fact that I wore a cap meant a better material situation than the others'. I suppose it was still pretty cold. Up there, between the mountain ridges, winter lasted from October to April.

The photo was taken by the village photographer. His name was Ireciu and he was Ukrainian.

The village was too small to have a kindergarten, so all the children were brought up at home until they were old enough to go to school. The school was located up on a hill and consisted of seven grades. When I entered the 1st grade I could speak German, Ukrainian and Polish, but I couldn't speak Romanian, so I had to learn it in school. We were taught by two Jews - a schoolmaster and a schoolmistress. I later met them in the camp. I started going to school at the age of 7 and I attended 7 primary grades. Classes were taught in Romanian. The teachers were Romanians who had been brought from the Kingdom, since our village only had Ukrainians. There were one female teacher and two male teachers.

The pupils wore whatever their parents could afford. Some were dressed in traditional outfits; others had watchmen's uniforms. After the Russians invaded Bukovina, classes were taught in Russian. In 1940-1941, we completed 7 grades in one year. I actually enjoyed the stories and the poems of the Russian authors.