

The Szwarc Family On Holidays



This is my family on holidays in Teodory in 1930. I do not know who took this picture. It survived the war due to a fortunate incident: before the war, my mother had mailed it to her sister, Ruth, who lived in the USA.

My mama, Maria Szwarc, nee Biber, is standing first from left. My papa, Benjamin Szwarc, is first from right. Between them you can see Mala Bajgielman, Mama's friend.

Me and my sister Renata are wearing dresses. In this picture there are also Lunia and Kazia, Mala Bajgielman's daughters.

My parents' wedding was on 11th November 1920 – they chose this date to celebrate the anniversary of Poland's independence.

My parents were also living at 33 Wschodnia Street, in the same building where my mother lived with her siblings. Except that their place was a floor below, on the first floor.

I was born on 30th October 1925. I have a biological sister - Renata. She is two years older than me.

Before the war we both went to the same elementary school. She completed this school and went on to a Polish public vocational school on Narutowicza Street. She was studying book-binding. In 1939 she finished this 3-year vocational school.

We used to go for vacation to Teodory, 7 kilometers from Lask. The last year there was no money at all for vacation.

Three years in a row we went to Wisniowa Gora [summer resort, 10 km east of Lodz, popular with Jews in the inter-war period], because they built a swimming pool there and a dance hall, and they organized parties and dances there.

Today you would call it a club. My father worked at setting up electricity there. And we received – I think it was free of charge – an apartment to stay in, from the owners who were building it.

And we lived there [through the vacations] in two or three consecutive years. My mother, my sister and myself – whereas my father only came for the weekends.

The next two or three summers we also spent in Wisniowa Gora but in a different house, these were summer rentals. My mother cooked and we ate at home. We played with other girls, the daughters of people who came there for vacations.

We played ball, volleyball. These girls had a bicycle, so I rode a bicycle, too. I was never bored. There is no river in Wisniowa Gora. It was a typical Jewish summer resort.

I suspect that it was only Jews that went there, to spend two or three months each summer. There were no real peasants there, working in the fields, the sort you might see in Teodory. That was a real village.

On this picture you can see Mala Bajgielman in the center, she was a cousin of my mother. Mala's mother, who was very much a believer, used to come visit her from another city, and when she came, Mala would come over to borrow some plates, with a pattern different from her plates.

Then she would tell her mother that one set was for meat, and the other for dairy products. As soon as her mother left, she would return the dishes to us.

I remember she did this two or three times. The point was to reassure her mother. Mala lived on Piotrkowska Street, near Zawadzka Street. She took care of the house, and her husband ran an applications-writing service.