

Sarra Eidlin



This is me as a two-year-old. The photo was taken in Kherson in 1916.

My parents got married in 1913. They had a wedding with a Jewish chuppah. My mother took her husband's last name.

I was born a year after they got married, in 1914. I finished a seven-year Ukrainian school in Kherson.

During the first two years of studies I had a private teacher, Olga Richardovna. She supplied us with writing-books, taught us to read and to count.

My parents paid her for that. She was a secular woman. In 1923 I went to a Ukrainian national school and studied there until 1928.

I remember from my childhood how we celebrated all Jewish holidays at home: Purim, Pesach, Chanukkah and Rosh Hashanah. I lit lamps on Sabbath, I was a shabesgoy, as grandma called me and I was forgiven because I was just a small child.

I remember how I lit candles with grandma. Grandma always cooked food for Sabbath in a stove, covered up the stove door with clay to prevent food from getting cold, and everything was served hot on Sabbath.

We always had clear soup and peas, which were cooked separately. Stuffed fish was cold. It was before the famine [in 1930], and during the famine we ate porridge on holidays and on common days.

Besides this, I remember how grandma prepared for Pesach, how she burnt all breadcrumbs in the stove in a wooden spoon, everything was burnt together with the spoon.

We also had Pesach utensils. A stone was made red-hot, we threw it into hot water to purify it, and thus utensils were prepared for Pesach. We only had a few special utensils at home. All the rest were baked [burnt].

We bought milk from a Jewish woman for Pesach. I remember how we hid matzah under grandpa's pillow. It was the custom [The interviewee is referring to the afikoman]. One of the boys was supposed to take it out, when he turned away.

I remember Pesach 'fir kashes' [Yiddish], the 'four questions.' Certainly our boys, my brothers, did that. I was only present. One had to drink four glasses of wine. Each time one took the glass, a little had to be poured out into the plate.

We had six glasses on the table for five members of the family. The sixth glass was poured for Elijah the prophet and the door was left open. The chicken was cut by a shochet at the synagogue.