

Zuzana Minacova And Her Family On Holidays In Betlanovce



This is a picture of us during summer holidays at the swimming pool in the village of Betlanovce. The photograph is from the 1930s, I'm assuming that I'm about five years old here. Sitting on the left is my mother Pavla Severova (then Silbersteinova, nee Löwyova), beside her is my father's brother, Uncle Filip Silberstein, who died in a concentration camp. I'm sitting in Uncle Filip's lap, sitting beside us with a bathing cap on her head is my sister Anna Engelsmannova (nee Silbersteinova). On the far right is our cousin, who died in a concentration camp during the war. Jewish customs were observed in the family of my paternal grandparents; they cooked kosher food, separated their dishes for various foods and holidays, attended synagogue, and lived an Orthodox lifestyle. I was a child, so I don't remember any details that clearly, but I do remember that my cousins, sister and I were always at my grandparents' during summer holidays, and had the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with true Jewish sentiments. We were still kids, so we often got things wrong, and then Grandma and Grandpa had to correct our mistakes, so I remember that we had to stick knives into the ground, where they had to stay for several days so everything would be ritually clean again. Unfortunately, the idyllic summer vacations and carefree childhood at my grandma and grandpa's ended when I was eight. The Slovak State began, all those horrors and the persecution of Jews, and we stopped going to see our grandma and grandpa. Our parents had other worries, they had to worry about what to do, to hide whom where, how to survive. Starting at age eight, I was never in Betlanovce again. My father's entire family died in concentration camps. My father managed to save Grandma from the transport, he hid her in Bratislava until 1944, but in the end the transport didn't miss her, and she died in Auschwitz.