

Asia Matveyuk With Her Friends



I, Asia Leikind, photographed in Kherson with my fellow students from the Lugansk Medical School where I studied: Aleksandr Abramovich and a Ukrainian girl whose name I don't remember. This photo was taken just for the memory during a Sunday walk in the town in 1939.

I went to the Jewish 7-year school in 1926. Actually, it was a merge of the Jewish and Ukrainian 7-year schools: we had many common classes since there were not so many children in the town and Ukrainian and Jewish children spoke two languages fluently. We spoke Yiddish at home and Ukrainian and Yiddish to our friends. There was no anti-Semitism. We liked strolling in the Jewish, Ukrainian and German parts of our village. I had Jewish, Ukrainian and German friends. My friend Martha taught me German. I became a pioneer and then joined Komsomol at school. We liked parades on Soviet holidays. There were parties and meetings at school. We celebrated 7 November and 1 May at home.

In our village was a new club building constructed in the center of the village where young people from the whole colony got together in the evening to dance and socialize. The people were joyful and the village looked revived. Many young people from our colony were studying in colleges in Odessa, Nikolaev and Kherson. They came to the village on vacation that summer. We danced, listened to the radio and watched movies.

In summer 1934 I finished school and my parents sent me to my mother's sisters in Lugansk to continue my education. I was drawn to medicine since childhood and I could watch pharmacists making medications in the pharmacy across the street from our house for hours. I entered a Medical School in Lugansk. I lived in a hostel. After finishing my school I got a job assignment to Nikolaev I left Lugansk. I went to work as a pharmacist and also worked part-as an attendant in the hospital to earn more money. I lived with my distant relatives on my grandmother's side. I dwelled behind a curtain in the kitchen and was dreaming of getting a room of my own. To stay away from this corner I often worked night shifts in the pharmacy and studied. In 1939 I entered the extramural department of Pharmaceutical College and became subject to military service like all other medical employees. I had exams twice a year and received all excellent marks for my studies. In 1939 I was appointed director of the pharmacy in Peresadovka village of Nikolaev

region. I rented a room from a local Jewish family.