

Raisa Roitman And Her Cousins



This picture was taken in Rezina by the photographer Golovanevskiy. Here I am with my cousins. I am the first from the left and my cousin Monya Rubel is next to me. Leya Rubel is in the center, Nahman Roitman is sitting on the left, Revekka Rubel is standing to the right. The picture was taken in 1937.

I was born in Vad-Rashkov on 21st April 1926. I was given the Jewish name of Ruklya, but I was registered with a more modern Russian name – Raisa. My parents called me Raisa, only Great-grandmother Haya called me by my Jewish name. In 1930 my brother Motle was born.

In 1934, I went to a Romanian elementary co-ed school. I studied in Vad-Rashkov for four years. I had to go to another town to continue my studies, as there were no other schools in our town. I studied in Vornicheny for two years. The town was 18 kilometers away from us. I shared the apartment with two girls from our school. Our landlady was a Jew, Sima. We had bed and breakfast. She fed us very well. All of us lived in one room and got along with each other. On the eve of Sabbath, viz. on Friday we went home. We also went home for Jewish holidays. By then I wasn't as delighted by the holidays as I had been in the period of my childhood. I was just paying a tribute to tradition. Besides, I didn't have other things to do other than observing Jewish traditions.

My father's brother Yankel worked as a loader at the creamery since the age of 13. Yankel lived in Rezina. He got married rather early. His wife was a Jew called Pesya. They had four children – a boy, Monya, born in 1922, and the daughters Golda, born in 1917, Revekka, born in 1924, and Leya, born in 1926. Yankel worked really hard to provide for such a large family. He worked two shifts at the creamery. On 12th October 1935 my uncle died as a result of the collapse of the ceiling in one of the creamery premises. During his funeral the coffin wasn't open so that the relatives wouldn't see Yankel's dreadful remains.

For two years Pesya and her children lived on the money given to them by my father and the kin from Argentina. In 1937 they received an invitation from Argentina and Pesya left with her children. I loved them a lot, especially Revekka and my peer Leya. We took a picture together before they left. That was the last time I saw them. Before 1940 we received letters from Argentina and then the Soviet regime was established in Bessarabia and it was impossible to write to our relatives abroad. We couldn't correspond with them after the war either.