

Bluma Katz



This is me on my first birthday. My parents had this photo of me taken for the memory at a photo studio. This photo was taken in Ozarintsy in 1923.

I was born in 1922 in Ozarintsy and was named Bluma after my mother's mother and my father's deceased sister. Our parents spoke Yiddish to us. Of course, we also spoke Ukrainian. My parents celebrated Sabbath and Jewish holidays and were religious like all other Jewish families in Ozarintsy. Before Pesach all Jews whitewashed their houses and fences. About a month before the holiday they started making matzah. There was plenty of it cooked for the holiday. Mama made read borsch, chicken broth, puddings, stuffed fish, and chicken neck with liver and fried onions. She also made strudels, honey cakes and star-shaped cookies from matzah flour crushed in a mortar and sieved. Mama followed the kashrut. On the first day of Pesach my parents went to the synagogue. My parents took me with them, but left the younger ones in a Ukrainian farmer's care. On our way back home mama went to this Ukrainian woman to pick my younger sister and brother. We, children, did not know Hebrew. Mama and papa read prayers in Hebrew and translated them into Yiddish for us. During seder each person had to drink four glasses of wine. Children sipped wine from little glasses. Then we all sang jolly songs.

We also celebrated Sabbath. We had two bronze candle stands where mama lit candles on Friday evening. She covered her face with her hands and prayed over the candles. Occasionally we celebrated Sabbath with grandmother and grandfather. Saturday was a day off since it was the Jewish kolkhoz that made Saturday a day off in Ozarintsy while the rest of the USSR had an official

day off on Sunday. When they returned home, my father sat down to read religious books to us. He translated what he read into Yiddish for us. Mama had dinner ready, which she cooked the day before and left it in the oven to keep it warm. Adults were not to turn on the lights or stoke the stove on Saturday, while the children were allowed to do little chores. On Saturday we often visited uncle Borukh, my mother's brother. His wife Riva made barley flour pancakes on Sabbath. We liked them a lot. The adults talked and we played with Borukh's children.

I went to the 7-year Jewish school in Ozarintsy where we studied in Yiddish. I had excellent marks in all subjects at school.