

## Polina Levina



Me, Polina Levina, after I became a pioneer. This photo was taken in Babino in 1931.

In the fall of 1925 our family moved to the village of Babino. There were two Ukrainian lower secondary schools in Babino. I went to school in 1926. We studied in Ukrainian. We didn't have any problems with Ukrainian since it was the main language spoken in the village and we communicated in it.

I studied well at school. I had almost all 'excellent' marks. I liked mathematic and when I became a senior pupil I came to like physics. Since I was one of the best pupils in class I was among the first ones to become a pioneer. I remember the ceremony. There was a monument to Lenin in the central square of Babino. On 22nd April, Lenin's birthday, we came to the square. We stood in line.

The senior pioneer tutor at school said the oath of pioneers and we repeated after her: 'I, young pioneer of the Soviet Union, take this oath to love my motherland with all my heart, live, study and struggle as great Lenin bequeathed, as the Communist Party teaches us!' I never forgot these words.

Then Komsomol members tied pioneer neckties on us and we marched back to school following a drummer and horn player that marched ahead of our column. I felt as if everybody was watching me and marched with a straight back proud of my new status. I was very serious about becoming a pioneer. I believed that a pioneer should have only excellent marks and I got very upset when I received an occasional 'good' mark.

I had my pioneer duties. I became a pioneer tutor in the 1st grade. I went to my pupils during intervals, read books to them and told them about heroic pioneers. We sang Soviet songs and

recited poems. I attended their class meetings and felt like an adult. They asked me to advise them on various matters, help them with mathematics or Ukrainian language. I wanted to become a teacher like my mother and when I became a tutor, this wish became stronger. I attended a choir and a dance group at school. I was a sociable girl and had many friends at school. Teachers liked me, too.