

Mojsze Mendel Szwach In Bundist Summer Camp



This is my brother Mojsze Mendel Szwach with other children at the summer camp organized in Jaremzcze by the Bund. He is standing in the upper row, sixth from the left. My parents were very keen that my elder brother, Mojsze Mendel, should get an education. He was born in 1926. He was an unusually gifted boy. Then, of course, we still didn't have electricity. We had kerosene lamps at home. Mojsze Mendel, for instance, could make an electric bell using a battery and a few bits of some electric wire. And that caused a stir on the whole street. He was very talented mathematically. We went to a boys' school; there weren't any co-educational schools. There were Polish and Ukrainian grammar schools. Our arithmetic teacher, Lejb Rajf, also taught math at the Polish grammar school. And once there was this incident, in 1938, when my brother was in the 4th or 5th grade, when Rajf sent a trap from the Polish grammar school for my brother, so that he could show the grammar school kids how to solve a particular problem. He wanted to shame them by showing them that a 5th-grader could do things like that. Well, two or three days later, the boys from the grammar school lay in wait for him as we were coming back from cheder in the evening; they threw a coat over his head and beat him up terribly. And that was the price of solving a math problem.