

Grigoriy Sirotta And His Schoolmates



This is a picture of me and my schoolmates at the Jewish school in Nova-Ushytsya. The photo was taken in 1932. I went to the Jewish 4-year school in Zemikhovo. Then I had to move to Nova-Ushytsya to continue my studies in the 5th grade because there was only a primary school in our village. I began to study at the Jewish school in the early 1930s, and we studied all subjects in Yiddish. The pupils were Jewish. My school friends were the butcher's son, Izia Roitman, Yasha and Dora. We spent a lot of time together. We went swimming in summer, or we went to a dance or to the cinema. Later Yasha left to study in Odessa, and Dora moved to Moscow. I studied very well and finished school in 1932. I had the highest marks in all subjects except for physics, where I had a '4'. However, I couldn't afford to study in the nearest town with a higher educational institution, Kamenets-Podolsk, because we were very poor. My mother began to color clothes to earn some money. She knew all the processes and knew how to mix the colors. She was paid miserable money for her work. I remember the famine in Ukraine in 1933. I saw people in our village who ate grass. In the spring we picked green apples, pears and cherries. We boiled and ate them. We survived thanks to the villagers that year. All people were starving. We literally ate sawdust: we made bread from 2-3 handfuls of flour and added the same quantity of sawdust. We had all kinds of stomach problems after eating this 'food'.