

Julianna Kann



That's me. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1944 upon our return from evacuation.

Father returned to Tallinn in the fall of 1944 right after the liberation of Tallinn. Mother and I came back in December 1944. The house, where we lived before war, burned down during the bombing. Father was one of the first to come back to Tallinn. Most people who were among the first to return, got settled well, getting good apartments in downtown Tallinn, in plush pre-war houses. We also settled in a huge, posh apartment in the city. We lived there for a year. Then the owners came back. We had to leave. There was a problem with housing in Tallinn. We were given one room in a communal apartment at Jacobson Street. We stayed there for a long time.

When we had just arrived in Tallinn, I could not speak Estonian at all. I left for evacuation at the age of three and lived in Russia for three years. I came back at the age of six and was to go to school in a year. Of course, after my arrival I quickly made friends with Russian children and played with them. Once, Father told me that I would not play with Russian children any more, and showed me with whom to play. He agreed with an Estonian family, who was living in our yard, that their daughter would play with me speaking Estonian. Both of us disliked each other at first, as we were forced into communication, which was a burden for both of us. How could we be playmates and friends if we could not understand each other? We got by with that since we did not have a way out. Gradually we became friends. I learned the language within half a year as in summer I did not play with that girl any more. I went to a summer camp for children.

In September 1945 I went to the first grade of an Estonian school. I managed to finish the first grade before we had to leave the apartment. The school I went to was not far from our house. Father transferred me to a Russian school. He was calm that both of us knew both the Estonian and Russian languages.