

Ettel Bertram



This is a picture of my mother Ettel Bertram, nee Stiel. It was probably taken for registration or some documents in Cracow in 1939 or 1940. I found this picture at the Jewish Historical Institute.

My Mom was Ettel Bertram. She didn't like her name, so she said that she wanted to be called Eda, and that's what they called her. Mom kept house in the mornings, brought in the shopping and made dinner. She had her culinary repertoire. In the afternoons Mom went to the shop and sat there, and either wrote letters to her brother in Argentina, or watched the customers, because you had to be careful in that line. Dad often said to Mom in Hebrew 'watch', or 'watch out'.

All the food in our house was kosher. There was dairy in the morning and dairy suppers. And I asked why we always had dairy suppers except for Fridays and holidays. And Mom said that rich people eat meat suppers. We ate different things, sometimes herrings, usually scrambled eggs, or sardines, or sprats. I don't remember exactly. In the morning it was mostly scrambled eggs and coffee with milk. I remember it was chicory then. I don't know whether it was real coffee or ersatz. On holidays Mom and the maid prepared different dishes. But it was all kosher. The crockery was separate - separate for dairy products, separate for meat. And at Pesach, we would bring out this hamper, which we had special crockery in. The hamper was in the loft all year. And then we changed over all the dishes. The gas cooker was covered with this metal sheet. That was observed very strictly too. And when it was all over, what good did it do... Nothing! More unreligious people survived than religious ones.