

Jerzy Pikielny



This picture shows me skiing, sometime in the 1930s. I don't know where exactly it was taken. I was born in 1926. I didn't go to school until third grade because I was always ill, I often had bronchitis. At first I went to a private co-educational school called 'Our School.' Most of the students were Jewish. Two Jewish women ran it. We had teas with our class tutor in her apartment. We spoke with her about almost everything. I don't remember her name, unfortunately. At 'Our School' we spoke freely with the teachers about the opposite sex, something unthinkable at the all-male school I later attended. Naturally, the classes at 'Our School' were given in Polish. There were religion classes, which dealt mainly with Jewish history. I don't remember the names of the teachers. We didn't observe any religious rituals at home. Grandma Pikielny's was the only place we had some contact with the Jewish traditions. We had holiday dinners there. Although my father was the eldest it was usually his brother Maks who led the prayers. Alek, his son, was a year older than me and had had a bar mitzvah. I didn't have one, because in October it was already war. I

guess if I'd been supposed to have one I would've had to be prepared for it earlier, and there'd been none of that. I did have Jewish religion classes at school though, because they were compulsory.