

Irina Golbreich



This is me. I am a little over one year old. Mama and I spent the summer vacation at the dacha near Riga. That was where we were photographed. This photo was taken in Yurmala in 1935.

Our family spoke Russian in my childhood. Russian is my mother tongue. When my parents didn't want me to understand the subject of their discussion, they switched to Yiddish. They didn't teach me Yiddish. When I was born, Mama took maternity leave for some time to breastfeed me. Later she went back to work.

We had no nanny. Perhaps, my parents could not afford it. My father's sisters Emma and Yevgenia were more than willing to take care of me having no children of their own. Mama took me to one of them before going to work in the morning and picked me up after work. My aunts took me to the town park, read me fairy tales and played with me.

Later my parents hired me a Latvian nanny. She was a very kind woman. I was attached to her. She spoke German, and I picked up German pretty soon. She stayed with us till my parents sent me to a private kindergarten. Our tutors spoke Russian and German with us. I didn't attend the kindergarten all the time. At times I stayed with my father's sisters.