

Berta Finkel



This is I, Berta Finkel. I had this photograph taken for my identity card, I was wearing a navy blue jacket. I was older then, but I don't remember how old I was.

I, Berta Finkel, was born in Sulita in 1925. When I was little, I was a rather sickly child - I don't know why -, and my mother and father - may God rest their souls - went to the rabbi in Stefanesti, rabbi Friedman, and he told them: 'She will grow stronger in time.' They visited the rabbi in Stefanesti only once. This was a long time ago, when there were many Jews living in Stefanesti - I don't know whether there are any left there.

My parents spoke Jewish, Yiddish. They taught us, children, Yiddish as well, but, since we learned Romanian in school, we spoke Romanian. Our parents spoke Yiddish to each other, but we spoke Romanian. We studied Hebrew in school. We didn't go to the cheder - there was no cheder in Sulita. But we attended the Jewish school, and that's where we learned Hebrew. Our Hebrew teacher was a certain Mates Iui, he was an old man, and there was another teacher, Balter, who

was from Bessarabia. And afterwards, when the war broke out, Balter returned to Bessarabia ⁴. He was the younger of the two. And we had another 2 teachers, who were Jewish, but we learned Romanian at the Jewish school. And Hebrew was a separate subject matter. And then, if we didn't make progress, my father would call the rabbi, Mates lui, to visit us at home, and he taught us to read Hebrew, both my brother and me.

The Jewish school consisted of no more than 4 grades. The attending children were rather numerous, there were several grades: 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade, but after so many years I cannot remember how many classes there were in each grade. The boys and the girls were mixed, we learned together. All in all, I graduated 8 grades there, in Sulita. I graduated 4 years at the Jewish school and 4 at the Romanian school. I graduated 8th grade in 1937-1938.

I married here, in Botosani, in 1951. I met my husband, Mikel Finkel, through some relatives, namely one of my father's brothers-in-laws, Leon Segal. This uncle of mine was in the scrap iron business, and my husband was passing by, across that market, my uncle knew him, and told him: 'I have a niece, would you like to get married?' For he had 2 sisters who left to Israel, and he stayed here, and his parents were elderly people. And I came to Botosani, my aunt, Fremita, was still living here; I stayed at their place for a day or two, and I met him, somewhere downtown. I am old now, but I was beautiful back then, and I was dressed neatly, elegantly, and he liked me.

After marriage we lived with my parents-in-law, at their place on Zimbrului St. My parents-in-law lived in the kitchen, which was a separate building, and we lived in two rooms. We raised sheep until my husband died, and then we sold them, we stopped raising sheep. Ten years have passed since my husband passed away, he died in 1996. That's when we also sold the house where we lived in Botosani. We had 2 rooms there, the porch was in front of the house, and the kitchen was in the back. And we had to go out in the cold during winter, and we cooked there, for that's where we had the cooking stove and everything else. And in 1996 I moved in a block of flats where I live with my daughter.