

Raya Teytelbaumene With Her Schoolmates



This is a group picture of our class in the Jewish elementary school. I am the first from the right in the top row. I have a neat haircut. A beautiful black-haired girl, Roza Grinberg, dressed in a white-collar dress is the third from the left in the bottom row. She was in evacuation. She is currently living in Israel. One girl after her is Fanya. I don't know her fate. The second from the left in the top row is Kopa Grobmag. He is currently living in Israel. Manya Atamuk is the fourth from the right sitting in the bottom row. She was in evacuation. She is currently living in Israel. Bella, dressed in a white blouse, is on the left. She died in Israel. Our teachers: the fourth in the center with the streak of gray hair is Bromberg, over him is Kushelevish. I don't know what happened to them. The picture was taken in 1929 in Vilkauskis.

When I turned seven, I went to the Jewish elementary school. It was a private school, but the tuition fee was rather affordable for people with medium income. Poor families – there were a lot of them in Vilkauskis – were exempt from tuition fees for their children. I made many friends at school. They were two girls, Rosa and Manya. We went strolling together after classes or on the weekend. All subjects were taught in Yiddish in our school. We studied Jewish classical literature. We had religion class as well.

We had joyful celebrations of Jewish holidays at school, Purim was the special one. On that holiday there was a carnival, the Purimspiel. Almost all kids had traditional Purim costumes of Esther, Haman, Mordecai and Ahasuerus. I learnt about the origins of Jewish holidays at school. We merely celebrated them at home, and we, the kids, weren't told anything about them.

I was a mediocre student. I didn't get straight excellent marks, but I didn't have poor marks either. I studied there for four years. When my parents had to choose where my education would be continued, they decided that I should attend the Lithuanian state lyceum that my brothers had attended.