

Raisa Roitman And Her Friends



This picture was taken in Vad-Rashkov in 1935. I, Raisa Roitman, am sitting second on the left with my friends. The ones to the right died during the war, and Haya Furman, on the left, is currently living in Israel with her family.

I was born in Vad-Rashkov on 21st April 1926. I was given the Jewish name of Ruklya, but I was registered with a more modern Russian name – Raisa. My parents called me Raisa, only Great-grandmother Haya called me by my Jewish name.

I had a lot of friends, mostly among boys. In winter the Dniestr was frozen and we used it as a skating rink. I didn't have my own skates. I usually borrowed them from some boys, who helped me skate on ice. In summer, I liked to stroll in the central park, located on the bank of the Dniestr, on the picturesque turn under the hill. There was a large and nicely decorated Orthodox church on the central square. The bell toll of the church was very beautiful and we liked to listen to it. I also liked going to the market, located not far from the church. The counters were full of all kinds of vegetables and fruits of different colors. There was also a wholesale of grapes.

In 1934, I went to a Romanian elementary co-ed school. I was good at my studies, ranking top of the class and getting the first and the second prizes. At the end of the year we were given prizes, usually these were books and backpacks. The teachers treated me very well. They had an equal attitude towards Jews, Moldovans and Russians. Jewish children were exempt from the course of Orthodox Christian religion. They were taught Jewish history. It was so interesting that Orthodox children cut their classes to attend our lectures. I liked such subjects of natural sciences as botany and zoology. I was also good at such crafts as knitting and embroidery.

I studied in Vad-Rashkov for four years. I had to go to another town to continue my studies, as there were no other schools in our town. I studied in Vornicheny for two years. The town was 18 kilometers away from us. I shared the apartment with two girls from our school. Our landlady was a Jew, Sima. We had bed and breakfast. She fed us very well. All of us lived in one room and got along with each other. On the eve of Sabbath, viz. on Friday we went home. We also went home for Jewish holidays. By then I wasn't as delighted by the holidays as I had been in the period of my childhood. I was just paying a tribute to tradition. Besides, I didn't have other things to do other

than observing Jewish traditions.