

Sally Uzvalova



I, Sally Barzak, on my 5th birthday. My father dreamed about a son and before my brother was born my parents dressed me like a boy. The photo was taken in 1932 in Soroki.

I was born on 14 October 1927. I was named Sarah, but I mispronounced the sound "r" in my childhood saying "Sally" instead of "Sarah". Everybody started calling me "Sally". My father and mother were very religious. My father had a seat near the Eastern wall at the synagogue and my

mother had a seat on the upper floor. My father made contributions to the synagogue. The synagogue provided food products to poor families to celebrate Pesach.

We spoke Rumanian at home. I only heard Yiddish when I visited my grandparents.

My parents followed the kashrut. We also had kosher utensils for dairy and meat products for everyday use. We often went to visit my grandparents on Jewish holidays. There was a rule in the family that the sons and their families celebrated Shabbat and holidays in their parents' home. At Shabbat my grandmother lit candles and said a prayer over them. My grandmother baked halas, made Gefilte fish and strudels. My grandmother said a prayer over the candles and then we all prayed for health and wealth of all members of the family. Children also participated in prayers. Then the family sat at the table.

At Pessach the whole family was going to in parental house. They put a big table in a bigger room to have the whole family fir at the table. The sons came with their wives and children. There was traditional food for Pesach on the table: Gefilte fish, chicken broth, matsah and potato puddings and most delicious strudels, salt water, greeneries and bitter horseradish. Salt water symbolized tears of Jews and horseradish - bitterness of the Jewish slavery in Egypt. The greeneries were dipped in salt water and eaten. My grandfather conducted the Seder. One of his grandsons asked him traditional questions. We followed all traditions, as my grandfather was a cantor at the synagogue.

My father's brothers had children and we were all very close. We often came to see our grandparents. Our grandmother was always happy to see her grandchildren. Our grandfather always prayed when he was at home. Sometimes we took advantage of the situation running into his store to grab a lollypop or something else. Our grandfather couldn't reprimand us because he couldn't say a word during his prayers. He only murmured "M-m-m", but couldn't punish us for what we did.

In 1933 my mother gave birth to a boy. He was named Oscar. His Jewish name was Ishye after my mother's father. The whole town was invited to the ritual of circumcision. There was a big table with gifts for children in the middle of the yard. There were 300 packages with candy and fruit. There was a violinist playing and there was much joy that a son was born.

When I turned 7 my parents sent me to the French grammar school in Yassy. I stayed in the boarding school. This grammar school was founded by French nuns and they were also teachers at the school. We studied all subject in Rumanian. There were quite a few Jewish girls in the grammar school. My mother and her sisters also studied at this grammar school. The fee to pay for my studies was rather high, but my father was sure that he would be able to provide for me.