

Halina And Renata Szwarc



This is me with my sister Renata, Renia for short. We are lying under a tree while on holidays in Teodory.

I do not remember who took this picture. It survived the war due to a fortunate incident: before the war, my mother had mailed it to her sister, Ruth, who lived in the USA.

I was born on 30th October 1925. I have a biological sister - Renata. She is two years older than me. Before the war we both went to the same elementary school.

She completed this school and went on to a Polish public vocational school on Narutowicza Street. She was studying book-binding. In 1939 she finished this 3-year vocational school.

We used to go for vacation to Teodory, 7 kilometers from Lask. The last year there was no money at all for vacation.

Three years in a row we went to Wisniowa Gora [summer resort, 10 km east of Lodz, popular with Jews in the inter-war period], because they built a swimming pool there and a dance hall, and they organized parties and dances there.

Today you would call it a club. My father worked at setting up electricity there. And we received – I think it was free of charge – an apartment to stay in, from the owners who were building it.

And we lived there [through the vacations] in two or three consecutive years. My mother, my sister and myself – whereas my father only came for the weekends.

The next two or three summers we also spent in Wisniowa Gora but in a different house, these were summer rentals. My mother cooked and we ate at home. We played with other girls, the daughters of people who came there for vacations.

We played ball, volleyball. These girls had a bicycle, so I rode a bicycle, too. I was never bored. There is no river in Wisniowa Gora. It was a typical Jewish summer resort.

I suspect that it was only Jews that went there, to spend two or three months each summer. There were no real peasants there, working in the fields, the sort you might see in Teodory. That was a real village.