

Halina Najduchowska With Her Nephew, Bronek Wyszegrod, On Holidays



This is an informal snapshot of me with my nephew Bronek Wyszegrod on holidays in Wisniowa Gora in 1938.

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.

My older stepsister was named Sala, and the younger one was Fela, and the step-brother's name was Hersz. We were step-siblings, but this did not make any difference, we didn't feel it that way. They addressed my mother as 'auntie.'

The oldest sister was 14 or 15 years older than me, it must have been 1931 or 1932 when she got married. But we stayed in close touch with one another after that.

She lived in Baluty, at 48 Limanowskiego Street, in a single room with her husband, Pinkus Wyszegrod, their son Bronek, and her husband's mother.

When I was seven years old, I was already an aunt: Bronek was born in 1932. Sala and Pinkus had a small ice-cream shop. It was almost exactly opposite their apartment – on the other side of the road. Sala used to help her husband run this shop.

An ice-cream cost 5 groszy. It was scooped up with a spoon into a wafer. In the summer they were quite busy, but in the wintertime it all came to a standstill, maybe they managed to sell some wafers and some chocolate, but it was not a good business then.

Pinkus had more free time then so he studied various languages, for instance English and Esperanto. He was very intelligent, and he just taught himself – out of books.

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.