

Matilda Levi With Her Cousin Dora



This is me with my cousin Dora. She's my uncle's, my mother's brother's, daughter. She's now in Israel. We weren't very close. It's hard to remember the details, I only know that the picture was taken in 1928, when we were on vacation in Bankya.

We didn't go to the seaside. When I was a child, we used to often go to Bankya. This was a small resort place in the past; today it is part of Sofia. They say that when I was a child we went during the holidays to Tryavna, but I only dimly recall it. The air was better there. We went to Zheravna: there was a young shepherd there. I liked him and he liked me, too. He gave serenades for me. In the mornings, he passed by with his goats. He had a flute and played it and I stood at the window and watched him. I remember that once we went to Hisarya. This is a Bulgarian mountain resort, famous for its healing mineral waters. My mother took therapy there; she had high blood pressure.

Actors from different companies used to come to Karnobat. I remember Gendov; he had a traveling troupe. We often used to go to the old cinema, and then the community center was built. My father took me to the cinema where the silent films still existed then. Gendov used to come often with his wife and the troupe. They were very poor. People said that Gendov's troupe used to rob the central shops when they came and always left debts behind, which they never paid off. But people weren't very impressed; they knew it would be that way. We went to the theater regularly, but after the performance we hardly went back home along the dark streets. We couldn't even think of transport then. I hadn't seen a car in Karnobat. There were no cars. There were only carriages and some covered cabs. I think they were called 'lando.' We ordered a carriage in the evening when we had to travel because the railway station was a few kilometers away. We went to the cinema on foot. Sometimes I went to the confectioner's with my parents. We sat at the table and were offered cakes and tarts from a big dish and everybody took what he or she liked. That's how the tables were served.