

Alina Fiszgrund



. This photo of me was taken at home in Przedecz , when I was three or four years old. I'm sitting on the table in a flower dress. I remember that dress. It was a white one, with colorful flower posy fancywork. This photo survived in someone's closet, but I no longer remember which of our family friends it was. When I was little, we lived in Przedecz, where my father had bought a pharmacy. In Przedecz there were some Jews, but there were also many Germans, and there were Poles. There was no ethnic hatred whatsoever. That hatred only broke out later. Everyone spoke German there, because the place was close to the German border. My father's name was Towie Birnbaum. He earned his degree from the University of Dorpat [today Tartu, Estonia]. Aunt Iwa, my mother's

younger sister, also studied in Dorpat. She was one of the first female students there. My father met her first, and that's how he got to meet my mother. I remember the story very well. My parents married towards the end of World War I, in 1917 or 1918. My mother's name was Perla Wyler. She was two years younger than my father, so she must have been born around 1892. She grew up in Slupca and Parysów. I think she had a governess, as was customary for middle-class home at the time. She was the pharmacist's daughter, so they weren't just anybody. I don't think she had official high school education, though she spoke several languages. She spoke German, French, Russian, Polish, and Yiddish as well. I was born in Ruda Pabianicka near Lodz, but my ID says Lodz, and my war-time fake papers state Przedecz as my birthplace. The documents say I was born in 1921, but it seems to me it was a year earlier. When I was little, I had all the toys I could dream of. I was very fond of dolls. I had pretty ones. Girlfriends would visit me, kids from the neighborhood. I played with them. I was about eight when I got a tricycle. I vaguely remember that. Near our house there was a field where soccer matches were played. And when no game was taking place, I'd go there to ride my bike. There was also a large yard and a porch at the back of the house where you could play. The porch was unglazed, made of wood, so on sunny days it was very nice to sit there. On rainy days, you had to be careful, because, sitting at the edge, you could get wet.