

Susanna Sirota With Her Friends



Here you can see our pioneer unit. This photograph was taken in the foyer of the theater and we were very proud of it. From the right in the lower row - I, my friend Chaya Sribna is behind me. This photo was taken in Priluki in 1935.

I went to school in 1931. There were 13 schools in Priluki: one Russian, two Jewish ones and the rest were Ukrainian. I studied in a Ukrainian school. There wasn't even a discussion about it. I spoke Ukrainian and this school was near our house so I went there. Children and their parents could decide where to study or send their children. There was no nationality issue at the time. I had Jewish, Ukrainian and even one Belarusian friend, but national origin didn't matter whatsoever. We had nice textbook. I remember the phrase 'We are not slaves, slaves are not we.'

We prepared for becoming pioneers. It was quite a ceremony. There was a large photograph of our pioneer unit in the cinema theater where we were photographed wearing our red neckties. It meant a lot for us. There was an amateur art club at school. I sang well and I remember singing 'Kalinka' [Russian folk song] in the choir. There was also a noise instrument band where I played the castanets. I also attended the macramé, knitting and sewing club. We spent all our time at school. We studied the Ukrainian language, which was our mother tongue, and Russian literature and language. We had very good teachers. What we learned at school made the foundations for our future life.