

Zsigmond Brichta, Kati Andai's Maternal Grandfather



Grandfather Brichta, my mother's father. My mother's whole family lived in Oberland [today in Slovakia]. I don't know anything about them, they all died, nobody survived. My grandparents lived in Kassa [today: Kosice]. Grandfather was a sportsman, he was tall and neat, a very neat man. He swam splendidly. He had a little moustache. They were not orthodox (nobody was in the family), no, they weren't religious at all. Grandfather came from a large family. He said that when he was seven years old, his parents told him: 'Well, we have kept you for a long enough time, from now on you shall keep yourself; so off you go!' And he went to work at a near-by shop. He was completely uneducated, but he educated himself. He was a very curious man, he read a great deal; he spoke Hungarian, German, Slovakian impeccably. He also wrote in these languages. He had a beautiful handwriting - he wrote with Gothic letters. I think their mother-tongue was German. My opinion is that they spoke German more easily than Hungarian. They talked to me in Hungarian, but not to

my mother. My mother knew German like a native speaker, and she wrote letters in German. My grandfather always wrote to her in German. He tried all kind of things. He had a pawn-shop, then a hotel, then he was a book-keeper. I think they went a bit bankrupt. When I was born there was a private house, and it seems that they sold it, because when I went there in the summer they only had a flat that opened onto a yard. The toilet was inside. There was a wash-hand stand in the kitchen, where one could wash oneself. [This was] in a one-storey house; the sun shone into the yard, and there was an oleander in a pail. My grandparents poisoned themselves in the ghetto of Kassa, so they were not [deported]. My grandfather was over 80 when he died in the ghetto.