

Gyula Foldes



This is a picture of me aged around two, so the photo was taken in 1935 - in the Appollo photo studio in Pesterzsebet [now a district of Budapest]. I was born on 4 Liszt Ferenc Square in 1933. It was a smaller apartment and my father thought, that a bigger one was necessary and he looked at one in the area. He was offered one on 6 Terez Boulevard, where no one had lived for months because a prostitute had lived in it who had been strangled by her boyfriend, so people didn't want

to move in. My mother and father weren't so bothered by this and they got it cheaply. They moved there in 1934. It had five rooms, my mother's dental surgery was there, a waiting room and two hallways. The surgery went under the name of Mrs. Foldes Dr Julia Altman. The house was owned by a certain Mr. Sugar, a bachelor. He wasn't a nice man. He had an ugly, little dog which we always chased with a friend of mine in order to annoy the dog and Mr. Sugar. There was always a row with the concierge, Uncle Sarkany, who said we had to be quiet and not make a row. There was a lift in the house but we preferred to run down the stairs. We had a nursemaid called Ilonka Buko. She looked after us mostly, but did some housework as well. She came to Pest because her parents had sent her to a relative of theirs as she could make a living here more easily. She got an ear infection, which wasn't treated properly, so she entered the Pest Israelite Community Foundation's public hospital, and went to have an operation in Szabolcs Street. She wasn't a Jew of course but a few Christians were also patients in the Jewish hospital. She lived with us until 1943 when she had a row with Aunt Giza about something, and then she left. She was an old maid. Something must have happened to her in 1944-45 during the siege, about which she never spoke. The Russians had caused some scandal. [Editor's note. Ilonka, as so many women were then, was probably raped by Russian soldiers.] She came back in 1946 but not as an employee. My mother confirmed that she had looked after children, and put her through some sort of college, and then she became a baby nurse in Vas Street hospital, and retired from there. She had an apartment and came nearly every day to see us.