

Vasile Grunea And Judit Grunberger



This photo was taken in 1935 in Brasso. It is probably in the fall; I can see from the coat that it was in the fall but we aren't wearing scarves, so it couldn't have been winter yet. It's my sister Judit Grunberger (nee Gruber) and me in the photo. I am the smaller boy, I was called by that time Ocsi, laddie. These knickerbockers were very fashionable at that time, they were called plus-fours, and

they were gathered below the knees - all well-bred bourgeois boys had such knickerbockers. The interesting point about this photo is our caps, these were the caps of the Jewish elementary school - they were dark blue with white stripes. If you look closer, you can see that my sister's cap has three thin stripes and one wider stripe. The wide stripe meant that she was in the 4th grade. There are only three thin stripes on my cap. We didn't have to wear a school uniform in the Jewish school, everybody could put on what they wanted, we only had uniform caps. The picture was taken in a studio, the Julietta photo studio - it was run by a Jewish photographer lady, who was called Julietta Springer, if I remember well. My sister is one year older than I, she was born in 1925, and I was born in 1926. Looking back now, I can see that she could always think more maturely than I, although there's only a very small age difference between us. She helped me a lot in my studies both in elementary and secondary school. When she was in first grade, I was still in kindergarten, and when I went to first grade, she was already in second grade. But when I went to first grade, I could read and write well already, because I learnt it from her and my mother also taught me a little. This both had advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage was that I was extremely undisciplined because I was bored. When the teacher started teaching the alphabet to the others and told them to draw a line, I was obviously bored. I tried to talk with my neighbor and I remember that the teacher put me in a separate bench alone for a while so that I wouldn't have anyone to talk to. I didn't go to cheder. There was a four-grade Jewish elementary school in Brasso, where the language of teaching was Romanian, but there were Hebrew classes, which were held by the director of the school, Kain, for a while. Religion classes were mainly held by rabbi Deutsch and in the framework of these classes he usually gave us lectures on Jewish history, Jewish self-esteem, arts, and Jewish writers. What's more, he also organized a youth service for the pupils of the school on Sabbath. The Jewish elementary school - which was officially called Scoala Primara Izraelita Brasov [Israelite Elementary School of Brasso], I think, and had only 4 grades - was located in the same street as the Saxon elementary school, we were separated by an alley-way only; we had blue caps and the Saxons had red caps. I went to this elementary school from 1933 to 1937. It happened very often that when we or they left school, we ran into each other and they picked a quarrel with us and we had fights. We must have been more vehement because we beat them up from time to time and then the director of the Saxon school came to complain to the director of our school. We got to know about these visits because the director used to call us and tell us not to fight with them again. So, there were such conflicts between us.