

The Little Vera Farkas With Her Family



My maternal grandparents and my mother's siblings.

Maternal grandfather's name was Jakab Strausz, grandmother's name was Betti Weisz. They lived in Kallosemjén. It was a typical Szabolcs county Hungarian village: a small, dirty village, with wooden fences.

They [the Jews] didn't live separately, but there was quite a Jewish life, they came together in the synagogue. The synagogue was very nice, and it was on the main square.

There were quite a lot of Jews, and they came in from the neighboring farms. Just like my aunt and her husband.

My grandfather was a smallholder: he had two acres or four acres, I don't know. They were not rich people. He grew tobacco and melons. I remember that there was a big tobacco-drying barn in the courtyard, and there was a beehive. He went out to work on the land.

His sons sold it, I think. His only employees were those who were at the house, just one or two people, from time to time. They had the sort of village house, which was large enough to have enough room for the many children they had.

When I was at school I always spent a few weeks there in the summer.

I remember grandmother's head was always covered, and grandfather always wore a hat. Lighting candles on Fridays was natural too. All the family was there at the supper on Friday night.

And on Saturday there was that sort of colored woven candle [the havdalah candle], which was up on the wall, and then on Saturday afternoon, the holiday was over when it was lit.

And the phylacteries, grandfather always put them on, I remember that too. And on Friday, they made bread in a huge wooden bowl for the whole week, and these tiny challahs for the children and grandchildren. Pasta with cottage cheese, that was always the main meal on Saturday.

There was a small kitchen garden, and there were horses, and a carriage too, there was even a separate small house for the groom and the staff. There was a large well in the middle of the courtyard, and there was a mulberry tree next to it, and a million ducks underneath, so if a mulberry fell down all the ducks gagged and it was eaten up.