

Zoltan Blum With His Wife Rozalia And A Neighbour



In this photo I am together with my wife Rozalia, the first from right and an ex-neighbour, in the center of the photo but I cannot remeber her name anymore.

I still remember that she was born in Cluj Napoca, Cluj county but she was living for a while in Gherla, close to our house. She is now living in U.S.A. The picture was taken when she came back for a visit in Gherla in the 2000s.

I live with my wife in Gherla, Cluj county, in a medium-sized house located on a street that's close to the Armenian church - the town's most important historical monument. The house still lacks finishing; the rooms and the garden are decorated in a simple fashion.

Here's how I met my wife. I had come back from the army, but there were no Jewish girls in the village anymore. As you can imagine, back then, it was considered a shame for a Jew to marry someone who wasn't Jewish.

There were cases of Jews marrying Christian girls, but they were very rare. Nevertheless, I didn't find the thought of spending my entire life alone appealing at all. So I found me a Christian girl. Her name was Rozalia, nee Hideg.

She was born on 16 September 1933 in Fizesul Gherlei. Hungarian was her native tongue. One of her uncles was a neighbor of ours and that's how I met her.

After courting her properly, I asked her if she wanted to marry me. She said yes. She had no income. As for me, thanks to my trade, I did have nice clothes, but that was it - I had no fortune.

So I told her: 'Take a good look at me and think it over. I have nothing except the house where I grew up.' She was poor too, but that didn't matter. We went to the mayor's office and got married.

We didn't have a religious ceremony because it's not allowed for a Jew [in case of a mixed marriage]. We got married in 1952. We've been together for 53 years now.

The friends we had in Gherla were Jews, Hungarians, and Romanians. We used to visit the Jewish ones especially on Purim, when we exchanged the traditional cakes.

When I was little, I would go around with cakes more often than after the war. All these troubles caused some of the faith to be lost... But a rabbi said:

'In the middle of all this cruelty, turn not to God, but to Man, for he is the one responsible.' [Editor's note: This phrase can be heard on the occasion of the Holocaust commemorations.

Mr. Blum may have heard it from Liviu Beris, survivor of Transnistria, vice-president of the Romanian Holocaust Survivors' Association.]