

The Blum Family In The Yard Of Their House



This photo was taken in our yard of the house where I was born in Fizesul Gherlei. It is me Zoltan Blum, my wife Rozalia, and my daughter.

In the center of the photo is Berta our only daughter. At the time when the picture was taken she was 2 years and 6 months old.

Here's how I met my wife. I had come back from the army to Fizesul Gherlei, 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.

Berta, was born in 9 December 1955. She went to college in Bucharest and got a degree in economic cybernetics. She is not 'officially' Jewish - according to the Jewish tradition, you are a Jew

only if your mother is Jewish. However, we registered her as Jewish in school. She now lives and works in Oradea.

She's married to Francisc, a man who has both Romanian and Hungarian origins. Her surname as a married woman is Marian.

They both have decent jobs, but they're not rich or anything...

My daughter thinks of herself as Jewish.

She has a son, Petrisor, who has just graduated from college. He's into commerce, just like his mother. She raised him as a Jew.

I owned horses and a cart until 1962. I worked as a cartman. I was also a bit of a butcher, but I was soon forbidden to work on my own - the State became the owner of everything [8]. So I relied on my cart. Peasants would need to have a lamb slaughtered from time to time.

I took care of this, bought the hide, and took it to the authorities. They paid me and I, in my turn, paid the peasants for the hide. I had to deliver 150 hides.

I did the slaughtering on Sunday and delivered the hides on Monday morning. When cars began to appear, I knew my cart had lived its days.

There was little left for me to do in my village, so I threw away my cart and started looking for another job. My friends found me a position at the sausage factory [in Gherla].

Two of their employees had been drafted, so there was an opening. They hired me as an untrained worker in 1959. That was only fair, since I had no education except my 7 grades. When I came back [after World War II], I made no attempt to continue my education.

When I moved to Gherla, I had already been working in the factory for some time. From 1959 to 1962 I commuted by bike from Fizesul Gherlei to Gherla. The road had no asphalt.

This was also true for the town proper, where streets were paved with stones, not covered with asphalt. The commute became a pain in the neck - I worked till late and got home close to midnight or even after midnight.

So we decided to move to Gherla, which we did in 1962. We sold my parents' house in the village and built this one over here. When we moved in, it had no doors or windows.

At first, we occupied a single room that we had fitted with windows. It took three years to finish the house - I was just a worker and didn't have money... I spent 20 more years or so working in the sausage factory.