

The Stern Family



You can see in the picture my maternal grandparents, who lived in Miskolc, my grandfather was a private first class during World War I, that's why he is wearing a uniform, my mother as a little girl and her two brothers.

My maternal grandfather was a copper-smith, he was born in Satoraljaujhely in 1879. He, as my mother told me, got a slap in the face from his father or mother at the age of fourteen, which he considered unfair, and because of this he left home. He worked all over Europe as a copper-smith, he traveled near and far, he was a wanderer. And though he was a copper-smith master originally, he became the first plumber handicraftsman in Miskolc. He plumbed the Miskolctapolca bathing establishment, he had the water laid on and installed heating in the surrounding castles. It also belongs to this story that at that time there was economic depression several times. My grandparents lived in their own house one time, and there was a time when they didn't have anything, because they had lost everything. My grandfather was a very cultured man, they were social democrats. My grandmother told me, that in 1917, when there was the revolution they demonstrated in Miskolc and sang the International. [Editor's note: The march of the international labor movement]. He died at the age of 54, in 1933.

My maternal grandmother was born in Sajoszentpeter, sometime around 1884. I don't know where my grandmother and grandfather met, they got married, lived in Miskolc, and in 1906 my mother was born. But they had a baby-boy, too, before, who bled to death when he was circumcised. My mother's younger brother was born in 1908. Her other brother was seven years younger than my mother.

My grandmother lived in a single storied, three-bedroom-apartment in Miskolc. There was another apartment, too, in the house with inner courtyard. Perhaps her children supported grandma, because she was a housewife all her life. I don't know either whether she was religious or not, but she managed a kosher household, I remember when my uncle mixed up the knife for the meaty and for the milky, my grandmother stuck it in the ground to make it kosher again -, and used to go to the mikveh, too. I was with her at the shochet, who cut the chicken, there was a round stone in a dark room, and the chicken hung on a hanger so that they would bleed out -, as far as I remember. And my grandmother bargained at the market place. We used to go shopping to the Buza Square market, and as a child from Pest I was ashamed, because the countrywoman sold the corn for four or ten fillers and my grandmother bargained. I was very embarrassed.