Armin And Sarolta Mittelmann

My grandparents are in this picture, Armin and Sarolta Mittelmann. I don't know the year this picture was taken, but they look very young. The picture was taken in Marosvasarhely in the photo studio of Geza Csonka on Kossuth Street. The studio was founded in 1904.

My maternal grandfather's name was Armin Mittelmann. He was born in Lippa, near Arad, in 1863, and from there he got to Marosvasarhely, in fact first to Szaszregen. My grandfather was a tall, slender, handsome man, he had a moustache even when he was old. He was handsome even when he became old. I have memories about him from when I was around 4. They loved me very much, I was the first grandchild and especially later, when my father got sick, my mother went to the hospitals with my father, I spent a lot of time with them. So I became very fond, especially to grandpa, because grandma was already dead by then.

My grandpa graduated middle school, it was a great thing then, even he had no diploma, he had middle school. So he got into the bank, he was the director of the savings bank from Marosvasarhely. At the moment the Casa Armatei [the Army House] is there on the corner [at Petofi square]. This was a serious institution and he had a high position. He was very appreciated, because he was a very honest and intelligent man. He wasn't rich, he had a salary, and from the salary he maintained his five children and his wife. My grandparents were Neolog Jews. Grandpa didn't prayed at home, at least when I stayed there. Maybe he did it when he was young, but near Arad the Jews were usually assimilated, they kept their religion, but they grown up with Hungarian culture. Mittelmann grandpa use to went to the synagogue at high holidays with a hat on his head, they had kosher household at home until grandma lived, but after she died, when he got married

for the second time, he married a Reformat woman, there were no more kosher household, but he always observed the high holidays.

My grandparents' house was in Marosvasarhely, grandpa stayed in Regen only until my mother and his brother, Sandor were born. My grandfather had five children, the other three were born in Vasarhely. I don't know which year they moved to Marosvasarhely, but mom went to school there, so it means they moved when she was still very young. My grandparents didn't have their own house in Vasarhely, they lived in the Mestitz house, on the Gyorgy Dozsa street - today it's the dermatology clinic. The Mestitz family lived upstairs [Editor's note: Centropa made an interview with Julia Sheiner (nee Mestitz). Zsuzsa talks about her parents here] and my grandparents downstairs, they were on very, very good terms. When mom remained a widow, we lived there together with the grandparents, until mom, after two years, got married for the second time. My grandparents - interestingly, I remember very well the apartment - had three big rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. Grandma took care of the household. There were two maids [helping her], Hungarian girls, they came from the countryside, one of them helped out in the kitchen - there were three normal meals and a hot supper, so they had to cook - the other girl cleaned, and she probably supervised the children.

My grandmother, Sarolta Mittelmann, the grandpa's first wife was a Jewish woman, her maiden name was Sarolta Weisz, she was born in Belenyes [Bihar county]. I don't know where they met, but it was a love match, not an arranged one - grandma was a pretty, charming, nice woman. While she was still alive they observed the Jewish traditions, they had a kosher household. Grandpa wasn't a religious Jew, he wasn't Orthodox, but Neolog. Grandma died very young, in 1926, she had brain tumor. Grandpa's sister took care of the household for a while, but even then we used to observe the holidays. For example the Pesach with changed dishes, without bread, and the eves of Seder. A set of utensils and china for the dinner was put away for Pesach. Then they put away the utensils we used normally in a chest, and they took those which weren't chometz. The family came together, at least those who remained, and my grandpa lead the Seder eve.