

Janos Gottlieb As A Child



This is me [Janos Gottlieb]; my father [Laszlo Gottlieb] took this photo of me in the garden of the house where I was born in Nagybanya, in 1931.

I was born in 1929 in Nagybanya. From the age of three I lived at my paternal grandparents.

My grandparents lived in a village somewhere near Nagybanya for a while, I was with them there too, then in Nagybanya.

But when I was five years old, my father took me with him, he rented a quite nice apartment, in a nice part, let's say, of Nagybanya, in a villa.

The owner was a woman from Kolozsvár, a widow, her family name was Herczeg.

The rent was quite high, but it was in the outskirts, the air was fine there.

My father always feared that I got tuberculosis or something like that. This was when I was five.

We had somebody who did the housekeeping; my father had a good salary, in those times this didn't mean a problem.

Later it was my step-mother who did the housekeeping. Well, it wasn't her who actually worked, but she gave out the tasks for everybody.

It wasn't her who did the cooking, we had a cook. This wasn't a problem.

It was something extraordinary that in the neighboring villa a dentist lived, who was called Kalman Gottlieb.

He wasn't our relative though. Due to an accident or maybe to an illness Kalman Gottlieb became immobilized, he couldn't walk, so he brought there his niece - so his brother's daughter - to have her there to help him.

That's how it happened that when I was seven years old - approximately in 1936 or 1937 - my father got married for the second time, he married this lady.

I already knew her, Lili Garai, and we were on good terms. Interesting enough that she was called Garai, because her father changed his name from Gottlieb to Garai.

But in fact they weren't our relatives. Grandfather Gottlieb, who became Garai, lived in Deva.

So my mom, my second mom came to Nagybanya from Deva. I didn't keep the contact with grandparents Gottlieb, but I visited them once, since they survived World War II.

[Editor's note: For they lived in South-Transylvania, which belonged to Romania during World War II.] I knew them before the war already.

I don't know their first names anymore. I called them grandma and grandpa.

My sole problem during my childhood was that I was orphan. Yet I didn't feel so motherless, because they behaved so nicely with me.

My father was not only a daddy, but a mom too. He looked after me in a very kind manner, not to speak about his parents, especially about my grandmother.

Later my second mother, whom I loved a lot, took care of me very gently too.

I called her by her name, Lili. I had a very beautiful childhood. The environment and the people were all very nice.