

Albert And Bella Steinmetz Are Engaged



I'm with my new [second] husband here: bride and bridegroom. How sad I was, take a look! I was such a sad bride. Very sad. I was a bride yet on the photo, we didn't have a wedding yet. This was a very soft dress, made of a soft material. Some kind of print dress. Patterned on a white base. I wear the necklace here too. I'm so attached to some things, like the wedding ring, that I didn't consider them jewels. Though this is an antique piece as well.

I got married to my second husband in 1947. First we got married at the local council, that was the civil marriage, then we had a religious one too. It was a typical Jewish wedding, under a wedding canopy. It started at noon, at half past twelve. It lasted maximum half an hour, and it was quite close, in that large synagogue, which wasn't finished, in the Brailei street. They started to build it before the war, and gave up in 1942, what would that be good for?! [Editor's note: Bella Steinmetz speaks about the former synagogue of the Orthodox Jewish Community. The building was built up in 1927, in the time of secretary Ferenc Friedmann, and it could hold thousand persons. Next to the main building two smaller prayer houses and several other premises were built. Due to deportation and mass emigration after WWII the synagogue was left without members, and it wasn't finished. Its façade was rebuilt completely, this resulting in the ruination of its style. At present the walls are even unplastered, this showing as well its unfinished feature. Presently only the synagogue in the Scoala street is in use.] In 1947 two rooms were finally plastered, to have an office. Later there was an office, the office of Jews, so to have a centre for the Jewish community, because Jews were coming home. You see, there were even weddings! Quite a lot in fact, because there were a lot of young people, widows.

The ceremony was held in the yard. We still had a rabbi, even a shochet, but I don't recall the rabbi's name. I was so angry that I was hopping mad. I had agreed with them previously to set up the wedding canopy not outside, but in the office, because I had been married before. I knew anyway that I didn't have any relatives, nor did my husband, so I didn't need at all a public or a fuss. They said 'Alright, no problem.' My brother lived in Brasso, but they came, they stayed in a hotel, because I had one room in that big house. I said: 'Don't come to pick me up, I will walk to the synagogue by myself.' I was ambling alone very sadly, I walked all the way crying. You have never seen such a sad bride in your life like I was. I remembered my first marriage, and this one was so miserable, without a family... The fact that my mother didn't escort me, nobody escorted me... I was very sad... Not even Hitler could take away the memories. Until this present day. I was walking, and then I saw that the canopy was set up in the yard, and the crowd - there was a lattice fence - was standing there and waiting for me. I got so angry! The person I talked to knew that I had been married. But he didn't ask me if my husband had been married before. So I fell angrily upon this fellow, that 'We agreed to set it up inside, so why did you do this? Do you think I need all this circus?' My tears started to fall. He said: 'Excuse me, dear Madam - he spoke a bad Hungarian, he was from Regat -, but you didn't tell me that the bridegroom was still a boy!' That's how he expressed it. My husband was a single, he was 44, me 36. I got angry. I said: 'So what?' So he informed me that a person who wasn't under the chupa, the canopy, must be in the open air.

I didn't wear a wedding dress, first of all because I was a married woman. Well, if I had had money, I would have bought a more elegant dress. I was wearing a suit, and a hat of course, and they put a veil on my head. My groomsman was my brother, my husband's best man was Flora's, his sister's husband, Onyi. The canopy has legs. They recite a prayer, pour wine in a small glass, first the man drinks, then the woman, after that the man puts it on the ground and treads well on it. I walked round my husband too. The groomsman took me by my arm, nicely, and we walked round twice the bridegroom under the canopy. That was all. After that - my sister-in-law's place was very close - we went to her, and she offered us a good wedding lunch. A good and delicious meat-soup, we had roast, we had gateau, we had fruits. That was it. It was in May, we had what one could find in May, vegetables. Then my husband ordered a taxi, and took me to Kolozsvar, we stayed there for one day.

I had luck with my husbands, that they dressed me, and my sister-in-law. My second husband too. Though we didn't have money anymore, however, he bought me all the beautiful things I have. He went to Bucharest many times, he was in Bucharest for two or three days in almost every second month. He had quite a good job, yet his salary was low, because he wasn't a party member, but he had to work at breakneck speed. For example he arrived home, I still have the winter suit he brought me. He saw some elegant textile on the Victoriei Avenue, and he entered [the shop]: Well, I have to buy this to Bella! And I told him: 'We live in such a misery, in these two rooms - from the five rooms -, so why do you buy me so expensive things?' I still have it, and I still wear it in wintertime.