

Piroska Hamos And Etel Schneller



This is me (on the right) and this is my sister Etel, who had just died. The picture must have been taken in 1918 in Balassagyarmat. My mother was still alive then, but where, when and why this picture was taken, I don't know. I know that we were wearing this same dress when we went to visit someone and my sister Etel was scared of the dog. He didn't harm her, it was just barking; she backed away, and ended up backing right into a bucket of water. I only have very vague memories of the time in Balassagyarmat, only one or two things are very vivid in my memory: for example once, Etel was sick; on Friday evening the candles were lit and Dad lit a cigarette, which is forbidden, among other things, for Jews at holidays. And mom got angry with him. And Dad

suddenly threw the candle holder onto the floor in his anger. My other memory is that when my dad was a soldier, and he came home for a holiday, he took me and Etel, holding our hands to my mom's sister, because he said that Ipoly street, where we lived, led straight towards the Ipoly (river), and the Czechs were shooting from the other bank whereas Zichy street was zig-zagged. And I remember that in our courtyard there was the Jewish community's matzah bakery, and there was some sort of black, steam engine-like machine, and this steam engine-like thing was bombed and made an awful lot of noise. Once, when I was already eight, there was a big commotion, and lots of whispering, but we could still hear that Mom had died. Our brother was a five-month old breast-fed baby at the time, and people said all kinds of things, of course, not to us children, but we heard that they could see my dad carrying my Mom on his back and throwing her into the Ipoly. The police questioned him too. Of course, there wasn't a word of truth in it, because Mom committed suicide. I don't remember my poor mother's funeral, but I seem to recall a long wooden box standing on something and there were a lot of people.