

Piroska Hamos As A Baby



This is me in 1913. The picture was taken in Balassagyarmat. I was born there in 1912. My maiden name is Piroska Schultz. My sister, Etel, who is only 15 months younger than me, was born in 1913, and we had little brother, Pistike, who was eight years younger. I was born in Balassagyarmat, Etel in Ovar, which now belongs to Slovakia, because, my dad, - I just heard this, because I was very little at that time - I don't know how it came about, but he worked in Berlin for a while. But I don't know how long for. And when my sister was born in October, the rumblings of war had already started. And then, dad came home. But mom came home to her parent's house in Ovar, to give birth. I know it for sure, that when dad came home, we came back to Balassagyarmat, because I know, that we lived in Balassagyarmat, in Ipoly Street during the war. 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. My Mom died in 1920. I was only eight at the time, and then we never asked about it. Later, when I had grown up, I was more curious, but then there was no longer anybody to ask what had happened.