

## Imre Hamos With His Daughters



This is my husband, Imre Hahn, and our two daughters, Marika (on the right) and Judit (on the left.) The picture was taken in Matyasfold, in our garden sometime around the 1940s. In 1929, when we got married, I was 17 and my husband was 30. We found a house, where we moved together already [before the wedding.] We wanted to go to the outskirts of Budapest, because we bought it together with my mother-in-law and she wanted to live in the countryside. She really liked me. She preferred to stay at my place, rather than her own daughter's. She went to her daughter's for a day or two every month, but then she would call my husband, after no time at all, 'Come and pick me up, I'm coming home!' She was an old gossipmonger. Her sister, Aunty Lina, also lived there in Matyasfold, and they sat together and gossiped about the family. She was a kind woman. She

loved the children dearly. She took them to the cinema when she was still well enough. My mother-in-law wasn't at all religious; she didn't go to the synagogue. She fasted [at Yom Kippur.] My husband worked for MEFTER, the Hungarian Royal River and Sea Shipping Stock Company; I don't know what position he had exactly, some sort of a clerk. We converted to Christianity because of my husband's office, because he worked for the Hungarian Royal River and Sea Shipping Stock Company. This was a state-owned company and he was picked on at work. A colleague of his, who wanted to the best for him, pushed him to convert to Christianity, so that we would have no problems. In 1934, the Jews were unwanted already. And he liked his workplace. To be honest, I don't know if he was promoted after this. Back then, I didn't really care about rankings and suchlike. He always got a bit more money. We were christened in the Rozsa Square church in Budapest. My elder daughter, Marika was 10 months old then. She was born in 1933. She was also christened. My daughter Judit, was born as a Christian in 1935. Only our godfather was there. We didn't even have a godmother. This colleague of my husband, was an older, very religious man. He was our godfather. I don't think we had to go to religious classes. I got some book and I read it; Catechisms or I don't know what. This [the conversion] wasn't too much of an issue. We didn't get together with Christians, so when Judit was born, we didn't even know who the godparents should be. Back then, there were green-cross district nurses, who dealt with children and pregnant women. I asked ours to become the godmother and she accepted. I don't even remember the christening. There was no celebration. I didn't even want it, my natural mother was not very, but quite religious. She didn't wear a wig, like her twin sister did, but she did keep the Friday evening candle-lighting. I was raised in this religion; I went to these kinds of religious classes. I knew it better than the Christian religion. And my husband wanted us all to be assimilated. I didn't want it and we argued about it for a very long time and then I said that I'd agree to the children being Christian, but I didn't want to myself. But my husband said we couldn't raise two types of children in the family - because at that time, it worked that the girl [would have been] Jewish and the boy Christian [editor's note: according to the Hungarian regulations of the time, children born in a mixed marriage, were registered such that boys were registered according to their father's religion, and the girl's according to their mother's.] This colleague pressed my husband very hard. And in the end, I was taken in. Of course I did everything I could, to provide the girls with the appropriate religious upbringing, especially when they went to school; I went to church with them and they were confirmed etc. But I don't know too much about the Christian religion, even now. During the war, I moaned about what sort of a pope it was who allowed that the Holy water that washes away all sins, didn't wash away our past Jewishness. The Jews, who converted to Christianity, were persecuted as much as those who didn't. I think, it was also just a formality for my husband [the conversion.] He didn't even go to church. He never went to church. My husband's mother was not at all religious. For her, it was all the same. From the catholic religion, we just kept what all the other Jews do: Christmas and Easter, the Christmas tree and presents.