

Braha Moskovits With Her Granddaughter Rashela Katz



This photo was taken in Halmeu in 1935. The girl first from left is my younger sister, Rashela Katz, who was ten years younger than me, next to her is my maternal grandmother, Braha Moskovits, and next to her, to the right, is another cousin of mine, who was younger than me. The boy behind my grandmother is a cousin, the son of one of my mother's brothers, and you can see that he wears whiskers and a cap on his head, called streimel. When I met her, Grandmother Braha still lived in the town of Halmeu, located near Satu Mare. She strictly observed the religious rules, but these maternal grandparents were not as devout as the paternal ones. My maternal grandmother dressed as tradition requested. She wore a wig imitating natural hair, but every time she went to

the synagogue she had to cover her head with a kerchief that wasn't necessarily black - on holidays, it was white. My grandmother wore a wig till the day she died. I couldn't tell how many years she had spent in school, but, in any case, her handwriting was very beautiful. I know she was the head of the Civil Status Office, where births, marriages and deaths were recorded. From my visits there, I remember she kept a ledger where the newly-born were recorded and that she issued certificates. When my grandfather, Sigmund Moskovits, died, in 1921, the one who replaced him in his office of was my grandmother. He had worked as a sort of public clerk, as everything they did was public, for the population of the town of Halmeu. Whenever people needed their birth certificate, to get married or for the military service, my grandmother would issue it. She kept these records at home. My grandmother's house in Halmeu had three rooms: a guest room that was nicer than the other two, a large living room and a third room with four beds; there were also a kitchen with a stove and an attic. My grandmother didn't keep animals. She had a large, beautiful garden, separated from the courtyard, with many flowers, and an orchard. My grandmother didn't have servants; nor did my relatives, despite their having a better position than us. The wives stayed at home and did all the work. In my grandmother's town, Halmeu, there weren't only Jews, there were also many Romanians. But I remember my grandmother's neighbors were Jews. On the opposite side there was a house, behind there was a sort of chateau and in front there was a garden. In general, the neighbors got on very well with one another. Right now, I don't remember whether my grandmother would tell us things or stories, but I know she was highly respected by the entire community; she was like a mother to them all. She was greatly esteemed by the people and she was like a town's sage. Anyone who would set foot in her house would get a treat. My sister Rashela was born in Satu Mare in 1929, but I spent too little time with her, because in 1935 I left for Bucharest to work; she was still in elementary school. She was deported with the rest of my family, and she died in Auschwitz in 1944.