

Bella Katz



This is my mother, Bella Katz, before she got married, in 1918. She wears a wig in this photo, as the Jewish law requires, and around the neck she has a watch as a medallion.

My mother's maiden name was Moskovits. I suppose she was born in 1900. She came from Halmeu, which was not far away from Satu Mare. Satu Mare was the nearest larger town, and this

is probably why she went there. My parents told me how they met. Back then, it was the parents who arranged the marriages, and this was true especially for the religious Jews. In those days of great religiousness, girls and boys were not even allowed to frequent the same circles.

With Jews, marriages were definitely arranged! There used to be a matchmaker that was in charge of this. This was a real occupation and a matchmaker always knew whenever there was someone who had a daughter with a large dowry and someone who had a very studious son. With the religious Jews, girls with money would usually seek a studious boy. So, the girl's parents had to have some money in order to find an educated boy.

I'm sure my parents' marriage was arranged too, as they were devout people and couldn't have possibly seen each other previously. After all, this is how they were raised: to accept that such is life, that it has ways we couldn't even imagine.

I remember my mother always dressed according to the fashion of the time. She was a rather beautiful woman; at least, this is how I thought of her, as all children think of their mothers. She was tall and had a beautiful chest. My mother had more education than other women. I believe she had gone through the elementary school. Her mother tongue was Yiddish, but she also spoke Hungarian very well. After she got married, she read less than before, as she was busy raising the children and taking care of the house. What she usually read was not literature, but had more to do with religion, with raising children, and with the laws that had to be kept in a family. She read books in Hebrew and Yiddish.