

Samuel Izsak And His Siblings



This is me and my brothers and sisters. The photo was taken in 1924 by the photo artist Bela Csonka in the yard of our house on Zsigmond Kemeny Street in Marosvasarhely. In the foreground these are my two sisters, Ibolya Marton, nee Izsak (on the left) and Hajnal Latter, nee Izsak (on the right). We, the boys, are standing in the back. Ferenc Izsak is on the left, next to him it's Laszlo Izsak, then Ivan Izsak and, on the right, that's me. In the background you can see the crimson rambler that decorated our yard. Hajnal liked it very much, and I asked my sons to plant a stool of it on her grave in Haifa. Unfortunately the plant couldn't resist the climate. My parents got married in 1907 in Marosvasarhely. They never told me anything about the ceremony. My oldest sister, Hajnal, was born in Sepsiszentgyorgy in 1908. They moved to Marosvasarhely probably the same year, or early in 1909. Hajnal finished the Jewish elementary school and another four years in the Reformed middle school in Marosvasarhely. My oldest brother, Ferenc, was born in 1909. He finished the Reformed high-school in Marosvasarhely. My second oldest brother, Laszlo Izsak followed in 1911. He studied at the Romanian high-school in Marosvasarhely. In the interwar period he was a contributor to the *Korunk* in Kolozsvar. Balint was his pen-name. My third brother, Ivan, was born in 1912, and I came next, in 1915. The youngest of us, Ibolya, was born four years later, in 1919. She emigrated to Israel after World War II, and then moved to her sister in Canada. The majority of the inhabitants of Vasarhely were Hungarians. The center was dominated by Hungarians and Jews. I was born right in the center of town [that is, Samuel's family lived downtown]. I don't remember the name of the street we lived on, but there was a Greek Catholic church there. Behind it there was a line of houses, and among these houses there was one called Tovisi house. The houses were usually named after their owners or other inhabitants. I was born in this Tovisi house and, as far as I remember, we lived there for a while. I recall that there were lots of rats in the basement and on the ground-floor. My older brothers and sisters used to break glasses and put the splinters in the basement so the rats would hurt themselves and die.