

Julia Pollak



This is my maternal grandmother, Julia Pollak, nee Gajdusek. The photo was taken in Eger in 1910. My grandparents on my mother's side come from the Pollak family. They were these so-called Polishi Jews, Polish Jews. My grandfather was called Jakab Pollak. He was born in Gyongyos in 1839. My grandmother Julia Pollak, nee Gajdusek, was born in Verpelet in 1848. This was a big family. Mom had known some relatives but I didn't know any - money divided us. Grandmother's relatives, God knows, maybe they only had a few dimes more than us, but they looked down on us, the poor relatives. The Pollak grandparents also lived in Eger like us. They lived in a typical Jewish building. There was a big, shabby apartment building by the stream, and many Jews, different types of Jews, but mostly poor Jews lived there. I had many friends from there. Grandfather Pollak was a haberdasher, as they called it back then, so he traded in dry goods. He started trading and going to fairs when he first came to Hungary, so the Pollak relatives were a line of merchants. He met his

wife Julia here, I guess, but even my mother didn't know anything about this. They weren't rich, but they had many children. At that time it wasn't so uncommon to have seven children. So what if they had seven children? They would raise them! When the Eger stream burst its banks, my grandfather was ruined, the goods he had - and he didn't have much, because, as I said, he went to fairs and traded - were ruined in the water. And he was completely broke. I remember my grandmother; as far as I remember, my grandfather wasn't alive any more when I was small, but I have a photo of him. He had a beard, but he didn't have payes. They weren't bigoted, despite the fact that they were Polishi. Grandmother always wore a wig, even at home. And she was bald under her sheitl. I don't know if she had a special wig for the holidays but I'm pretty sure she did. She must have had one because they were very fussy about these things. My mother didn't wear a sheitl. She kept her hair after she got married. She had nice ginger hair; she was a very beautiful woman.