

Ferenc Friedmann



This is my dad, Ferenc Friedmann. The photo was taken in Eger around 1940. He is standing in front of the door to our cellar in our garden. This was a rural house in fact. There were three apartments in it. The Rosenbergs, from whom we rented our apartment, lived in one, the Szerenyis in the other and we in the third. The house was on Dobo Street. In Eger most Jews lived in one quarter, in the center of town, in Dobo Street, Dobo Square and Magyar Street. It had developed like this by chance, but when I think of it, I can see the stores in my mind's eye. Grocery, haberdashery and whatnot. Almost all my relatives were storekeepers. The Jews were mainly involved in commerce; they were greengrocers, they had various stores. There were non-Jews in

this quarter as well, but not too many. And there were some Jews scattered in other parts of the town because Jews continued to come to live in Eger from the villages around. But Jews and non-Jews didn't mix, Jews didn't move to the Christian quarters. Our apartment wasn't big. We had two rooms, one for the parents and one for the children. There was a small stove in the room, and wooden floors - I remember that we had to scrub them. Electricity had already been installed in Eger by that time. But the water pipes were only installed in the second half of the 1930s. There were one or two artesian wells, and we used to go there with a bucket to get drinking water. Everybody had rainwater in a barrel in his yard. We had rainwater in the summer, too, we collected it from the gutter. I loved it; we used to go out early in the morning, and we would splash about in the barrel and take some in to wash ourselves. We had to wash up every day. We went out to the barrel in the winter as well. We would put on a shawl, fill up the basin and take it in. Most people think that we didn't have water in those days. But we always had water, only you couldn't drink it because it wasn't good. I remember the door to the cellar and the underground entrance to the Castle of Eger. Nowadays you cannot go through there but when we were children, it moved our imagination. The cellar went under the hill and I have never been to the end of it. We never dared to go to the end, we were afraid that the Ottomans may be waiting for us there. This fear pervaded our childhood, we were always wondering what we would find if we went a little further. It was all very interesting.