

Max Lovith



This is my father Max Lovith in Mexico. The photo was taken in 1925. It is a historical monument behind him but I can't say where it was. The photo was taken before my mother and I went to Mexico. My father is wearing elegant lace-up shoes. The tie was essential - he always wore one. He thought himself to be a serious man. People called him Miksa here in Kolozsvár. With his handwriting on the back of the photo it says: "It's a good picture, isn't it?" No matter how hot it was in Mexico I didn't see a man from the middle class or above to wear short sleeves. You can see my father's watch-chain hanging out from his pocket on both sides, so he must have had two watches. He was a cigarette smoker and later on he switched to the pipe. In Romania, by 1922, the fascist movement established itself among the students and there were already fascist protests. There was a terrible incident in 1923. It was a student protest, they were walking from the Hungarian theater to Malom Street. That part of Kolozsvár was already built up and there were lots of Jewish

shops and Jewish signs. When the marching students, who were delighted to have won Transylvania back - this also belonged to the way of fascist thinking and extreme nationalists - saw the Jewish name on my father's sign they broke the shop window, got into the store and destroyed, plundered everything. They beat up my father so badly that he was brought to hospital. Once my father recovered, he decided that he wouldn't stay here but leave the country. There were expensive watches in the store, because in the old days only people with good watches got their watches fixed, they were pricey Doxas, Omegas and other such quality watches and the missing jewelry also counted as loss. The family collected everything they had left because they had to compensate the store's customers. Since my father was already a member of the family, my mother's family couldn't have demanded him to stay and work off the value of the compensations. So my father took whatever money was left, arranged to get his passport and a ship ticket for himself and then he left. I suspect that in his eyes, after living in Switzerland and Russia, Mexico wasn't the most attractive place and I think he probably wanted to go to New York, to America. Most likely he ran out of money and that's why he only got as far as Mexico. But I could be wrong and he could have talked to someone on the ship who might have spoken to him about the possible prospect of being a watchmaker in Mexico. My father was a talented man: he succeeded to learn Spanish, and in poor circumstances, with little money, but with his knowledge he was able to open a store. I remember the store we found when we got there. He was renting it from somebody, it was a very modest dark long store room. Upstairs, at the end of his room there was a bed and there was also a gun hanging on the wall, which wasn't unusual in Mexico. That's where my father lived until we got there. Downstairs the store had a small window with blinds.