

Farkas Fischer's Passport Picture



This is a passport picture of my father, Farkas Fischer. The picture might have been taken in Nyiregyhaza sometime in the 1920s. My father was born in March 1878 in Opalyi, two kilometers away from Mateszalka. He married my mother in 1909; this was his second marriage. In his youth my father lived in Nagyvarad, too, but we didn't talk much about this. He perhaps completed six classes of elementary school, then he was a master tailor in Nyiregyhaza. He wrote interestingly, with gothic type. My father was an adorable man, he was highly respected in Nyiregyhaza, and he loved all his children very much. I think I was especially attached to him. There was an atmosphere of intimacy at home, which I tried to pass on in my family, too. My father made suits from fashion journals. He ordered the material from Budapest, and those who came in looked in the fashion magazine, or told him what else they wanted, what cut, and they got it. The customers paid a

deposit, and my poor father lost money on it many times, because many didn't pay or they paid by installments. When later he couldn't have employees because of the anti-Jewish laws, he worked with an apprentice and one of us had to help him out while we were at home. Then the boys were drafted into forced labor, and the two older girls got married, and I was in Budapest from 1940, but one of us always helped our mother and father; we worked in the workshop. My father was a genuine middle-class master tailor, he had relations with a textile warehouse in Nyiregyhaza and Pest, too. They sent the samples from Pest, small, square pieces of fabric, and my father bought some of these. If someone wanted a different material, then he showed the sample and ordered that material. The customer chose, and my father covered the costs, and they always sent the bill. It happened that the man who had to pay didn't show up. Once I had a man get really angry with me. This happened at the end of the 1930s. At that time my father was already alone in the shop, because my two brothers had been drafted. My father had sewed a suit for a wealthy young man. The young man came in and said, 'Fischer, is my suit ready?' Then I told him, 'Listen up, go out and come in again, and greet me, because even the cattle moos when it enters the stable. Secondly, for you I am not Fischer, but Miss Fischer, and thirdly, your suit will be ready after you pay your debt. And otherwise, there's the door, you can shut it from the outside.' My father was as white as a sheet: 'How dare you say such things?' I told him, 'Dad, what can we lose, if this man behaves like this?'