

# The Mestitz Family Estate



This little card shows how my paternal grandfather Mihaly Mestitz's estate on Dozsa Gyorgy Street looked like in 1869. The picture was probably taken sometime in the 1910s.

My grandfather was born in 1830 and was originally from Bohemia, from a town called Raudnitz. I don't know why he came here, but I believe he was very young at the time. His name was originally Mertitz. He changed it slightly because Czechs pronounce 'r' as 's', and it seems he wrote it with an 's' instead of an 'r' when he came here. At that time, it was the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. [Editor's note: The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy came into being in 1867. Before this date both the Czech lands and Transylvania belonged to the Habsburg Empire.] I don't know anything about his education, nor where he lived, apart from Marosvasarhely. I only know that in 1850 he had a furniture store on the corner of the street formerly called Szentgyorgy Street [currently Revolutiei Street, downtown]. The store was called Mestitz Mihaly es fiai [Mihaly Mestitz and Sons]. A child never asks about these things, you know, she only overhears them, so I don't know too much about these things. From 1869 he operated a floorboard factory, a steam sawmill and a steam mill.

They must have been financially well off, since he was the first furniture manufacturer in Transylvania. My grandfather had to be a very forward-thinking man, as he advertised his furniture store. They were suppliers to the royal court. 'The cheapest place to buy furniture, the biggest furniture factory in Transylvania, Mihaly Mestitz and Sons: Szecsenyi Square, Marosvasarhely, and Unio Street, Kolozsvar. We only sell top quality products, and we provide the longest warrantee for them. Enormous supply of housewares, a wide range of Persian rugs.' This is an ad from 1860-1870. Someone found it in a book and photocopied it for me. They won the golden award, in any case the top award, at furniture exhibitions in Vienna, Budapest and in Spain, I think in Barcelona.

By the time I was born, our family only owned three houses, but some say the Mestitz family used to have 21 houses in Marosvasarhely. I believe my grandfather probably invested his money in real estate, and when he opened the furniture factory, he sold the houses.

We were living on Dozsa Gyorgy Street in a very large yard. The sawmill and the mill were also in this yard. On the other side of the street there was only one house. The estate between Kemeny Zsigmond Street and Poklos creek was all our property; later some parts of it were sold off. Uncle Ignac was living in the same yard with us. He wasn't quite right in the head and committed suicide while he was still quite young. We had a neighbor living on the same floor as us, in a smaller apartment next door, and everybody called her Keresztmama [Godmother]. I think she was Jewish. Below us there lived another Jewish family, the grandparents of Zsuzsa Diamanstein. Zsuzsa was born in that house. She still lives in Marosvasarhely, she is a friend of mine. A Christian family lived downstairs.