

Ferenc Mestitz's Family



This is my uncle, Ferenc Mestitz, his wife Ilona Mestitz, nee Fridman, and their children, sitting from left: Gyorgy, Janos and Bozsi. This picture was taken in Kolozs bath in August 1913, probably during their summer holiday. 'With love from Jancsi, Gyurka and Bozsi' - is written on the back. The postcard is addressed to Borszek, so my parents were probably on their summer holiday in Borszek. They spent their summer holiday there quite often, and my dad adored the place. They usually spent three or four weeks there, and that's why the postcard was sent there. Uncle Ferenc

was my father's the second oldest brother. He was born in 1864. He was also the co-owner of the furniture factory, and was the manager of the branch in Kolozsvár. The furniture store was in Unio Street, the avenue by the main square that leads to the Romanian Opera House. When he died, one of his sons, Janos, took over the store. I knew Uncle Ferenc's wife, Ilona Fridman, born in Zilah in 1873, - Auntie Ilonka. Ferenc died in Kolozsvár in 1923. She died later, in 1946, in Kolozsvár. They weren't religious Jews; she didn't keep a kosher household. They had three children: Gyorgy, Janos and Bozsi. Gyorgy, who became a textile engineer, married the daughter of the senior consultant dentist of the hospital of the Protestant Church, Sarika Filep, a craftswoman. One day they moved to Vienna to run a guesthouse in one of the best locations, on the corner of Kaerntnerstrasse. Business was going very well, and I think they even added another level to it. But then came the Nazis from Germany, closing down a large number of offices, hotels and guesthouses. They didn't know yet that Gyorgy was Jewish. His wife was Christian, and he had already converted to Christianity. When they requested his certificates of origin, Gyorgy came home saying that he needed to have those documents made, but he secretly arranged with his wife to sell the guesthouse and to meet somewhere. They never returned to Vienna. They came home, learned three professions - cookery, confectionery, and another I don't know - and emigrated to Australia, where, together with another married couple, they opened a pig farm somewhere near Sydney. Later they sold the farm and moved to Sydney. They bought a house and opened a confectionery. Gyorgy's brother, Janos, was the manager of the Mestitz furniture store's branch in Kolozsvár. Later the store became independent and they bought it. Janos had twins. The sisters graduated from medical school in Marosvasarhely. It was during the Hungarian era, and the university was Hungarian. They lived in Karoly Molter's house, where they rented a room. The house was on the same street as ours, so we often invited them over for lunch. Their mother, Ella Szathmari, still lives in Nagykanizsa and she must be at least 90 years old. Ella's parents had a guesthouse in Tusnad. Her mother visited here once and told my mother to send me there because she was certain that the air in Tusnad would do my appetite good. I went there after a while. It was a beautiful, pleasant spa. In the guesthouse, I lived with two of my Christian girlfriends; one of them later became the wife of Erno, the son of my uncle Albert Mestitz. Bozsi, the daughter of my uncle Ferenc, got married to a gentleman of half-Jewish origin and lived in Nagyvarad. He managed the local brewery.