



Eugen Braun

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This is my uncle Eugen, or Jeno Braun, also called Quack. He was a clown. He was born in 1895 in Nitra and died there in 1942. I'd also mention the black sheep of the family. This was Eugen Braun, a musical clown. The way it sounds. A typical musical clown, with a little violin and lots of instruments. He used to perform in circuses in Belgrade, Budapest, Sofia - all over the Balkans. A big black sheep of the family. A clown. But he was hugely successful. The king of the southern Slavs, Petar II even invited him to his court. What he did is that he arrived with a large violin, broke it, and took out of it a small violin. Otherwise he also had a cello. But he didn't want to carry it around any more, and so he gave it to me, and I then had to learn to play the cello, because of him. His clown nickname was Kvak [Quack]. Because he used to perform with a trained duck. The duck was trained so that he'd put it down beside him. He'd play and the duck would quack in time, when he wanted. How he did it, I have no idea, but he had huge success with that duck. Once a terrible thing happened. He sent the duck home, and Grandma Cili slaughtered it. That was a huge catastrophe. Now, I don't want to wrong her, whether she killed it on purpose or not. But a clown for a son didn't sit well with her. I remember, this was already in the time of the Slovak State. At the time Eugen was living in Romania. He said that he'd like to come home, and Grandma wrote him don't come, as things are bad for Jews here. Despite that he came. He was home for three weeks and died. He died a natural death in the hospital. As if he'd felt that he'd die and needed to say goodbye to his family. That might have been in 1942, right when the transports were taking place. He might have been about 44 or 45 years old at the time.