

Jenő Salgó



This is my father, Jenő Salgó. The photo was taken in Budapest in the 1930s.

My father was born in Mezokovesd in the 1880s. In 1901, he Magyarized his name to S. His original name was Sprerlinger. I don't remember what degree of education he got. But he could read and write well. He was pretty religious, his parents had intended that he become a rabbi, but he never did. He left his parents house at the age of 13-14 years old, and came up to Budapest. At that time he was strongly bound to religion – he spoke Hebrew excellently! Papa sure could jabber away in Hebrew. But he didn't become a rabbi and he was primarily engaged in trade. His brother had a

porcelain shop on Ulloi Street. All I know about him, is that he had siblings, there were eight of them, who likewise were all merchants. The war wore it down [their religious practice]. My older brother in America didn't keep the religion, just like me. Not because he was ashamed, but social expectations are different, life is different.

My father was an extraordinarily courteous downtown merchant, who worked in a fashion clothes store. He was the kind of merchant who stood in the door. When a customer came, he greeted them and asked them what they would like. He'd take them to the assistant. When they'd leave, he'd ask them if they found everything they were looking for. If not, then he'd take them back, to try this on or perhaps that. In those times, the Karady collar was fashionable – which is oval, wide, and made of big tulle or some translucent material, a little stiff, and long, today we'd call it a scarf collar – and turbans. He was expressly a gentleman merchant. I know that my father always dressed elegantly for work.

Father worked in a few shops in his life. The first, when he was young, in the 1920s, was Herzfeld and Zole on Kristof square. Then he worked in the S. and Company store on Deak Ferenc Street. His partner had the capital, he had the name. This closed for some reason, then Dad found a position, and became the manager of a textile store in Petofi Sandor street [all these places are on or near the fashionable Vaci street shopping area in downtown Budapest].