

Ferenc Leicht's Elementary School Class



This is the graduating class of 1939 of the Nagykanizsa Jewish elementary school. I am the third from right in the back row. Perhaps 3 or 4 of the children survived the Holocaust, from among the teachers they deported the woman and the man sitting next to her, the third teacher was drafted into forced labor. He didn't survive either.

Being a Jew in my childhood only meant for me that I went to a Jewish elementary school, and then it was obligatory for me to go to the synagogue on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. Because if someone failed the religion class had to repeat the year. Then I learned to be a prayer leader, I knew how to conduct the Friday evening service. When I went to middle school we left the class when the others had religion class, and the rabbi held religion class for us.

We weren't religious at all, not even my grandparents. They also assimilated completely. They told me, that my grandfather, who was a shammash, was always angry on Sundays, because he wasn't allowed to smoke, he had to give good example. Saturdays were a hell for them, because my grandfather was nervous and he nagged his children all day long. Not even my great-grandmothers were religious, because if they had been, they wouldn't have had natural children. And my parents not only dressed like the locals, they also used to kill a pig. They didn't observe the holidays at all. But in the bakery it wasn't really possible to observe the holidays, because most of the customers were not Jewish. We couldn't observe the Sabbath or the Pesach, because the leaven was always there in the bakery. Perhaps they went to the synagogue by turns on the biggest holidays, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. At the high holidays they fasted, but this was a completely incidental thing.