

Arpad And Olga Kovac



These are my parents, Arpad and Olga Kovac. This photo is from the time my father was in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I. It was taken in Novi Sad.

My parents probably met, like others at that time, through a shadkhan - a matchmaker. They got married on 10th December 1912 in Slavonski Brod [in Croatia, called Brod in 1912]. I know that the wedding took place in the synagogue. Besides they also had a civil marriage.

My father was born in Pivnice [Pined at the time] on 27th February 1893. It is a village in Backa. He graduated in Novi Sad. His parents moved to Novi Sad while my father was still small. My grandfather was doing business at the quarry in Paragovo at that time. My father spoke all three

languages very well: Hungarian, Serbian and German. He also knew French very well. My father wasn't religious, not at all. He went to school in Novi Sad, and he also studied in Pest [Budapest]. After finishing law school, he worked as a lawyer in Titel for a year and a half. Then World War I broke out and he joined the army. After the war he returned and opened an office in Novi Knezevac, where I was born. He was killed in 1941 around 12th or 13th October. He was deported along with the Jews of Banat to Belgrade and probably he was killed in Jabuka [infamous Serbian concentration camp].

They didn't socialize that much with the neighbors. My parents mainly socialized with Jews. One neighbor was a farmer and had a coach. He was a sort of country coach. The other neighbor was a tailor. Sometimes they went on vacations. At that time they mostly went to spas, but not that often. My parents were in touch with their relatives, but there weren't any in the village. Their relatives mainly lived in Novi Sad; outside Novi Sad they only met occasionally.

They dressed just like other middle-class citizens did at the time. We weren't rich, but we weren't poor either. I remember that my father bought a house in 1928; and then he added an annex to it. For village conditions it was quite a big house with a big plot of land facing the street. I remember when water supply was introduced and when they built the bathroom. That was at the time I was attending school already. There are artesian wells in Novi Knezevac [Banat], and one well was near our house; it was so rich with water that around 15-20 houses got connected to that well and supplied with water. Only during the summer, when the gardens were watered in the afternoon, the pressure declined, otherwise we had plenty of water. We had a garden, where we grew what we liked to grow. We had pets, a dog and a cat, which was pretty common. I also had a squirrel and a hedgehog. We had servants, among them a maid. We had books in the house, but no religious books, and the library was a mess. I remember that one summer I put everything in order and catalogued the books: there were around a hundred books, mainly fiction. Newspapers arrived regularly. There was no public library in the village.