

Ignac Gohman



This is my father Ignac Gohman. This photo was taken in Mukachevo in 1926, my father was photographed on his birthday. This is the only miraculously preserved photograph of my father during World War II. My brother and I found this photo in the storeroom of our parents' half-ruined house in Mukachevo when we returned from Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945. From this house our family was taken to Auschwitz where they all perished. This and few other preserved photos is the only memory of our dear ones who died tragically. Since then I've cautiously kept this photo in my family album.

My father Ignac, Itzhok was his Jewish name, was born in 1898 in Mukacevo. I don't know whether my father studied at cheder. I don't know at all what kind of education my father got, but he must have studied in cheder. Considering his religious parents it couldn't have been otherwise. Of course, he also finished a general education school. I don't know where my father continued his studies. I don't remember any talks about my father's childhood or youth. He was taciturn like my grandfather. My father worked as mechanic at the power plant in Mukacevo. There were big diesel units generating power for the town and my father was responsible for their maintenance. He must have had some special education to do this job.

My father and his sisters and brothers were not so religious as their parents. They observed Jewish traditions and religion to some extent, but they only did it at their parents' insistence. They only went to the synagogue at Yom Kippur. My father wore suits with colorful shirts, ties and hats.

Our family observed many Jewish traditions, but really they didn't accentuate their attention on them. We had candles lit on Friday evening and there was a challah for dinner, but it was a usual dinner: no blessing of the food and no prayers. This was the end of Sabbath. [Editor's note: this was the end of Sabbath in the Gohman family but Sabbath ends on the evening of the next day after the Havdalah ritual.] And the following day nobody thought that they shouldn't do any work. My father worked on Saturday and had a day off on Sunday. There was one crew working on this day, Sunday, but when there was a need, they called my father to work. My father worked as diesel generator mechanic. This power plant supplied power to the whole town. It was work for the government that was of high value. My father wouldn't lose this job for the sake of observing all rules on Sabbath. We spoke Hungarian at home and only when our parents didn't want us to understand the subject of their discussion they switched to Yiddish. They didn't teach us Yiddish.