

Alexandru, Margareta And Andrei Popper



This is a photo of our family taken in Buteni in 1930. We lived there in a rented house - my father had never owned any real estate. We had two or three rooms and running water; the heating was based on fire wood. The owner of the house lived there, too; he took care of the garden.

Buteni had a pretty large Jewish community; there were 15 to 20 families. Jews didn't live separately from the other inhabitants of the town. There used to be a beautiful Neolog synagogue, until 1924/25. It was about that time that many Jews came from Maramures and the Orthodox became the majority group. My father was the president of the community. We didn't have Talmud-Torah classes; there weren't too many children. We didn't learn Ivrit, but we did celebrate our bar mitzvah when we turned 13; the hakham prepared us for the event. We didn't have a rabbi in Buteni, we only had a hakham. The nearest was Rabbi Sonnenschein in Pancota, in Arad and in

Gurahont there was Rabbi Schwartz. After World War I ended, a very powerful Orthodox community was founded in Gurahont; it was larger than the one in Buteni.

The market day in Buteni was Friday; then Wednesday became a market day too, I think. My mother did all the shopping. My family wasn't very religious. My mother lit the candles on Friday evenings and ate matzah for Pesach. My parents celebrated the New Year, the Day of Atonement and Pesach. But we didn't eat kosher food, nor did we use separate vessels for Pesach. I remember we had books at home, mainly Hungarian literature. Today's high levels of crime are mostly due to the fact that, while the parents are at work, the children are left to do whatever they want. In the past, the mother stayed at home and raised the children. My mother always had an aid around the house. All the families used to have an aid back then; moreover, when there was a great clean up or laundry had to be done, more than one aid would be employed.