

Maria Leimseder, Blanka Gallo's Mother



My mother Maria Leimseder. The photo was taken in Nyiregyhaza in the 1930s.

My parents were Orthodox. They obeyed every Jewish law to the letter. My mother had a wig - and she wore it at home too.

At night she tied her hair up (in a scarf). (In my girlhood) I accompanied my mother to the mikvah. I believe they went to mikvah two weeks after menstruation and until then, not only could you not make love, but were not really allowed to touch. (My parents) had two separate beds and there was a bedside table in between.

On Friday afternoon they got ready, cooking the holiday lunch. Then, when the holiday began, the men went to the synagogue, the women did not.

My mother laid the table with a wonderful, snow-white tablecloth and lit lots of candles - because (she lit one) for every child and every dead relation. And the table was laid and there were two chalas (on) the table. She baked them.

On Friday night supper was usually fish in aspic, followed by meat soup, pasta granules and some sort of pudding. They kept this warm - then there was no gas but a wood burning stove - by putting it on this because they were not even allowed to warm it up.

On Saturday morning my mother went to the synagogue. She returned at noon, there was still some aspic left over. They did not warm anything up but ate warm cholent and made fruit soup in the summer.

There were separate dishes for meaty and milky food, and a separate cupboard and table for them, and there was the pair (i.e., the parve) which had nothing separate.

The fish, eggy onion and cholent were hors d'oeuvres, and then there was cold roast and in the summer cold soup too. And towards evening only the men went to synagogue, and when father came home he performed havdalah.

My mother, like my father, spent fantastic amounts of money on charity. But not for the religious community but for individuals, Jewish families. And how diplomatic they were! It was a big thing to provide proper food on Saturdays.

And on Thursday evening Mother sent money to a few families. On Thursdays, because that was when the men were at synagogue and would not be humiliated by it.

There was a women's association which my mother regularly attended. They (did) mainly charity work.