

Judita Schvalbova With Her Grandfather



In this picture you can see me, Judita Schvalbova, and my grandfather, Zigmund Donath. The picture was likely taken in 1937 in Zilina.

My grandfather was a master electrician in the Ganz factory in Budapest. He found a wife in Budapest, my grandma, who he brought back to Zilina. In Zilina they founded a dispatch service named the United Dispatch Company. We had it until World War II. Later my father and his younger brother also began to work for the family business.

It's hard for me to recall details of how my parents met. Young Jewish people used to meet in Zilina, and somewhere there they met. They were married in 1931, but I don't know the exact date. I wasn't born until five years later, on 22nd March 1936 in Zilina. I know my Jewish name from my mother, it's Jitl. I didn't attend nursery school, as my mother was at home. I'm an only child. Before the war we had this one Fraulein, who spoke German with me. She was named Irma and was from Bratislava. My mom stayed in contact with her for quite a long time after the war, and even with her son as well. I know that Irma suffered seriously from diabetes and they had to amputate her leg. When she died, her son let us know.

I don't remember any exceptional tomfoolery from my childhood. I was a very good child. Most of my memories are from the post-war period, because I was nine when the war ended. I only remember fragments from before the war. At my grandparents', the Donaths' place I had a little dog. At home I played with a midget rooster. At that time there was a fowl pest in Zilina, and he got it too. He died. We children buried him in a shoebox.