



**Choosing to be Jewish
Family Education Program**

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Pre-War Photographs for Part I

This collection of pre-war photos and their descriptions should be used in Part I of the Family Education Program, Choosing to be Jewish.

Print out the entire collection for each table, and place in the middle. You may want to laminate them for future use – to hang around your classroom, throughout the synagogue or religious school. Alternatively, you may give them to families to take home.

Please tell the participants to follow this three step process:

- a) Look closely at the photographs – what physical evidence do they see of Jewish life? (in some there is none).
- b) Read the descriptions – what do they learn about Jewish life? Are they surprised, based on what they see in the photograph?
- c) Note how this person's Jewish identity is similar or different from those in the other photos.

If you are interested in having the photographs separated from the interview excerpts, please contact Lauren Granite at (301) 787-0052.



Moisey Grinberg, Poland, 1922

This is a picture of my maternal grandfather, Moisey Grinberg, as a rabbi, a Hasid, praying. My mother's father Moisey Grinberg was a rabbi in the small town of Ostrow Lubelski in Lublin province. I guess my grandfather was born in the 1860s. I saw him only once when I was four years old, but I remember him well. He was a tall Jewish man with a big half-gray beard. He was handsome.

My grandfather was a rabbi of Hasidism. He seemed mean to me, as he looked at me in a way that made me feel awkward. Since then I've never really liked Hasidim. I believe the family was very religious, but I know no details. We traveled on a cart to see my grandfather through some woods, through the night. When we arrived in the morning a noisy bunch of Jewish people met us. I remember it well. Ostrow-Lubelski was a small town. I remember a small house that we entered to say 'hallo' to grandfather. I don't know how so many people could fit in it. They laughed and joked and seemed to be taking no notice of my grandfather's strict expression. They spoke Yiddish. My grandfather's wife died long before I was born. They had many children. I remember his beautiful daughters, but I don't remember their names. His younger daughter was getting married when we were visiting, but all I remember is the noise and enjoyment. This was the last time I saw my grandfather. He died in 1933. PHOTO TAKEN: OSTROW LUBELSKI, POLAND, 1922. INTERVIEWEE: YAKOV HONIKSMAN.



Teodor Pasternak, Poland, 1930

Teodor Pasternak (second from left in the middle row) with a group of Maccabi members on a trip to the mountain Domber in Ruthenia. The photo was taken in June 1930. The Maccabi association organized trips on the river Torysa, to the High Tatras and also abroad. My father used to plan the trips. Already in 1926 Maccabi had over 50 members interested in tourism. TAKEN IN ZAKOPANE, POLAND; YEAR/DECADE: 1930. INTERVIEWEE: IVAN PASTERNAK



Bernat Sauber, Romania, 1934-5

I am the one on the left, and next to me that's my younger cousin Jozsef Nemes. The photo was taken in Szekelyhid in 1934 or 1935, when we were still attending the yeshivah there.

My father wanted me to become religious and to be able to carry out the tasks, if not the rabbi's, at least related to the synagogue. I spent the first one and a half year at the yeshivah in Magyarlapos, but then my father didn't want me to be there anymore, because he knew that if I remain in Magyarlapos, it wouldn't work out. And the yeshiva in Szekelyhid [Sacueni, in today's Romania] was the most distinguished one in Romania, and all the great rabbis finished that yeshivah, and it was my father's obsession.

My father sent me to Szekelyhid, together with my younger cousin Jaszi Nemes. I was around 14 when I got there. It was quite costly to be there, we had a regular canteen there, and we stayed in a sector until a very rich American Jew came and built a beautiful, storied boarding house, and we moved in there. I was there for two and a half years. PHOTO TAKEN IN: SACUENI, ROMANIA, 1920-1945. INTERVIEWEE: BERNAT SAUBER



Friedmann Family Shop, Prein, Austria-Hungary, c. 1910

This is a picture of our shop in Prein, which belonged to my maternal grandfather Eduard Friedmann and was later taken over by his son, Isidor Friedmann. The photo was taken sometime in the 1910s. I am not a hundred per cent sure, but I think the people standing in front of the shop are my uncle Isidor Friedmann and my grandmother, Sofie Friedmann.

My grandmother wasn't very old yet and still helped out in the shop after her husband's death. She stopped wearing a sheitl when she grew older. When I was five or six, she was very old and lived in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. Uncle Isi wasn't very religious and didn't lead a kosher life. She wouldn't have touched any of the food in the house, so my uncle regularly drove from Gloggnitz to Neunkirchen to get kosher meat for her. In the afternoon my grandmother went down to my uncle and aunt's place for coffee. The house was always bustling with activity, there were often visitors, and our whole family got together there, too. The house was extremely beautiful. It was torn down a little while ago. When I heard about this I felt miserable. I think I would have bought the house if I had had the money because to me it was more than just a house.

The house and shop in Prein were Aryanzed in 1938. Sometimes there were people who tried to help my grandmother. The priest's cook, for instance, brought her fresh vegetables. However, there were also people who spit at my grandmother's feet; they were customers who had debts in my grandfather's shop. PHOTO TAKEN IN: PREIN. COUNTRY NAME AT TIME OF PHOTO: AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, PRE 1918. COUNTRY NAME TODAY: AUSTRIA.



Fania Brantsovskaya, Poland, 1929

This is the 1st grade of Sophia Gurewich's school where I studied. I am the 5th on the right, my friend Pesia Shneerson is the 4th on the right. Teacher Stephania Shabat is in the center between the banners, which say in Yiddish: We can all read and write. This photo was taken in Vilnius in 1929.

I was born on 22nd May 1922 in Kaunas. I was named Feige, but since my early childhood everybody called me Fania, which is a Russian name. There were a number of schools and gymnasiums for Jewish children in Vilnius. They were schools where the teaching was in Hebrew and Yiddish or in Polish. There were 7 and 8 year schools. There were a number of Yiddish schools: Gurewich, Shimon Fruk, Zeire Kuperstein schools. They were named after their sponsors and founders. There was a Tiksin school for retarded children, named after its founder Tiksin. The humanitarian Realschule and the Sophia Gurwich gymnasium were the best. I went to the Sophia Gurewich gymnasium. Our teachers had high goals to educate and teach Jewish children and make them well-cultured people. They taught us real things. I remember our teacher once brought milk to the class. It got sour and after that we knew how sour cream and butter were made. We wrote compositions and in senior grades we discussed literary characters.

We also celebrated Jewish holidays at school. We had a masquerade on Purim. We wore costumes. I remember wearing a Chinese costume once. We also brought *shelakhmones* (meshloach manot) to school. We put everything we brought from home into a big basket and everyone could take a treat from it. In this way poor children could also enjoy better *shelakhmones*. PHOTO TAKEN IN: VILNIUS, 1929. COUNTRY NAME AT TIME OF PHOTO: POLAND. COUNTRY NAME TODAY: LITHUANIA.



Ruth Greif, Romania, 1935

This here is me in 1935, in Sibiu, in front of our house there. I'm with my dog, Leo; poor dog, he was run over by a car. I was very fond of him.

I was born in Vienna in 1932 and I stayed there until I was three years old. My parents got married in 1929 and left for Vienna together. My father was an associate with a friend of his in the bicycle business - I don't remember his name - and they stayed there for a few years. But they eventually went bankrupt, and thank God, my parents returned to Romania because the war started a few years after they had left Vienna and Austria was occupied by Germany. I don't remember anything from those years in Vienna, I was too little.

My mother tongue, the language my parents taught me, was German, but my parents spoke Hungarian with each other, and I learned Hungarian like this, by listening to my parents talking to each other, and in the end I could speak it very well.

We came directly to Sibiu, where my parents had a tobacco shop. When we were in Sibiu, our financial situation was rather good, medium; there was no poverty.

When I was little, my mother always put me to bed at 8 o'clock in the evening, and woke me up at 8 in the morning. So I used to think that the day stops at 8 in the evening, the clock as well, and it starts again the next day at 8 in the morning! PHOTO TAKEN: SIBUI, ROMANIA, 1935. INTERVIEWEE: RUTH GREIF.



Dovid Genis, Lithuania, early 1930s

My elder brother Dovid came into the world in 1916. Having finished Jewish school, my elder brothers started working. First, they helped Father and then they started learning some craft. Only the eldest, Dovid, wasn't working. He was eager to become a rabbi and went to a yeshivah in Telsiai.

My brother was shot in Rainai along with 300 rabbis in the first days of the Nazi occupation.

PHOTO TAKEN: RIETAVAS, LITHUANIA, EARLY 1930S. INTERVIEWEE: RAFAEL GENIS.



Egon Lovith, Vienna-Diktat Transylvania, 1943

In 1942, before I was taken to forced labor, I was called up among other young Jewish men to a so-called preparation pre-instruction, because we were not allowed to go to the levente training [Hungarian military youth training]. Every week it was mandatory to work a full day whether or not our employer let us. I was working at a transport company and they let me take a day off to do my communal work. We had to assemble in the barracks. There they read the names and then we had to march with our tools, with shovels to the worksite. The yellow armband was made mandatory. Early on they gave us a Hungarian army hat and I even saluted but the officers protested against Jewish people with yellow armbands in civil clothes saluting them and our hats were taken away. When we were outside of the city we had to sing particular songs but I didn't open my mouth.

I am at the back, fifth from the left, among the people standing. This photo must have been taken in fall 1943. The rich Jewish boys were also here, because no matter what kind of high positions one's parents had, communal work was mandatory for every Jew. I received my order to register for forced labor in Nagybanya in February 1944. PHOTO TAKEN IN: KOLOZSVAR, 1943. COUNTRY NAME AT TIME OF PHOTO: VIENNA-DIKTAT TRANSYLVANIA, 1940-44. COUNTRY NAME TODAY: ROMANIA. INTERVIEWEE: EGON LOVITH.



Rosa Rosenstein, Berlin, 1930s

This picture was taken during a Purim celebration in Berlin in the 1930s. I'm the first from left. I had a large circle of friends and we liked to celebrate merry parties.

I had enough admirers. For example, there was this relative from Poland who wanted to marry me. He was eight years older than me. When he was in Berlin for the last time I was 14. When he left, I was 15. Sometimes he took me to a circus show, sometimes to an afternoon performance of an operetta. His father had a butcher's and was a horse trader in Oswieczim, as was usual for Jews in the province. He had to return home because he was the only son. When he said goodbye, he told me, 'Rosa, when you are 18, I will marry you.' And I, always having had a big mouth, replied, 'Sure you will.' PHOTO TAKEN: BERLIN, GERMANY, 1930S. INTERVIEWEE: ROSA ROSENSTEIN.



Stern Family, Northern Germany, 1931

This is a photo of the Stern family on the beach, taken in 1931, on the north coast of Germany. At the right bottom we can see my great-grandfather Adolf Stern and his son Helmut Stern. His daughter Adriana Stern hugs them both.

My great-grandfather Adolf was born in 1871 in Humenne, then Austria-Hungary. He got married in 1902, to Elizabeth, who was born in 1873 and died in 1959 in Great Britain. She left Slovakia after the war. PHOTO TAKEN: GERMANY, 1931. INTERVIEWEE: TOMAS STERN, BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

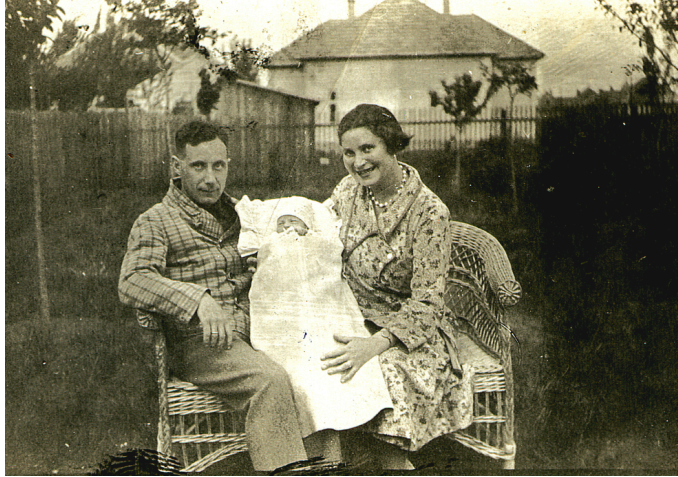


Katarina Loefflerova, Czechoslovakia, 1923

This was taken in the immediate vicinity of Bratislava in 1923, when I was thirteen years old. I'm pictured here with a circle of classmates. Our gym teacher, Denes Csisko is in the center of the picture.

We went on school outings from the Lutheran lyceum generally to places around Bratislava - Zerge mountain or Devin. There was no bus to Devin but we could go by boat there. They called it a hiking trip, so we usually had to hike a few kilometers. Our gym teacher, Denes Csisko always arranged these kinds of trips. Everybody brought a 'ten'oclock' [snack] with them. There were thirty-four of us in a class. The majority were boys, there were only four of us girls.

After that, I went to the Lutheran lyceum, which was, at that time, the best secondary school. Those who were preparing for Lutheran or protestant priesthood went there. I had classmates who really became Protestant ministers. It was a first-class school. It was the so-called 'conservative' high school, because aside from Latin, we learned Greek, too. I believe the teachers chose the area of study for most of the students, if they didn't show special aptitudes. If you liked a teacher, whatever he taught was your favorite subject. This happened to me twice. The homeroom teacher, who taught us Latin, was a disgusting guy. My grades weren't bad in Latin, but I didn't like him. But I had a cute, sweet teacher for Greek. I got a one in Greek. I loved it so much, that today I can still read it, and write it. PHOTO TAKEN IN: NEAR BRATISLAVA, 1923. COUNTRY NAME AT TIME OF PHOTO: CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1918-1938. COUNTRY NAME TODAY: SLOVAKIA



Piroska and Imre Hamos with daughter Marika, Hungary, 1933

In 1929, when we got married, I was 17 and my husband was 30. My mother-in-law wasn't at all religious; she didn't go to the synagogue. She fasted [at Yom Kippur.]

We converted to Christianity because of my husband's office, because he worked for the Hungarian Royal River and Sea Shipping Stock Company. This was a state-owned company and he was picked on at work. A colleague of his, who wanted to the best for him, pushed him to convert to Christianity, so that we would have no problems. In 1934, the Jews were unwanted already. And he liked his workplace. To be honest, I don't know if he was promoted after this. Back then, I didn't really care about rankings and suchlike. He always got a bit more money.

We were christened in the Rozsa Square church in Budapest. My elder daughter, Marika was 10 months old then. She was born in 1933. She was also christened. My daughter Judit, was born as a Christian in 1935. I didn't even want it, my natural mother was not very, but quite religious. She didn't wear a wig, like her twin sister did, but she did keep the Friday evening candle-lighting. And my husband wanted us all to be assimilated. I didn't want it and we argued about it for a very long time and then I said that I'd agree to the children being Christian, but I didn't want to myself. But my husband said we couldn't raise two types of children in the family - because at that time, it worked that the girl [would have been] Jewish and the boy Christian [editor's note: according to the Hungarian regulations of the time, children born in a mixed marriage, were registered such that boys were registered according to their father's religion, and the girl's according to their mother's.] This colleague pressed my husband very hard. And in the end, I was taken in.

Of course I did everything I could, to provide the girls with the appropriate religious upbringing, especially when they went to school; I went to church with them and they were confirmed etc. But I don't know too much about the Christian religion, even now. During the war, I moaned about what sort of a pope it was who allowed that the Holy water that washes away all sins, didn't wash away our past Jewishness. The Jews, who converted to Christianity, were persecuted as much as those who didn't. I think it was also just a formality for my husband [the conversion]. He didn't even go to church. He never went to church. My husband's mother was not at all religious. For her, it was all the same. From the Catholic religion, we just kept what all the other Jews do: Christmas and Easter, the Christmas tree and presents. PHOTO TAKEN IN: MATYASFOLD, 1933. COUNTRY NAME AT TIME OF PHOTO: HUNGARY. COUNTRY NAME TODAY: HUNGARY.