

Jozsef Kaufmann



This is my father, Jozsef Kaufmann. The photo was taken in the Zoltan Huszthy studio in Nagykaroly in the late 1890s or early 1900s.

My father was born in 1870 in Nagykaroly. He graduated from the commercial school in Nagykaroly, and then he took over his father's business. He got married in 1905. It was an arranged marriage. There were many matchmakers then: there were people with this specific occupation, who in Yiddish were called shadkhanim. My mother was wealthy, and I know that she received a large dowry in the form of cash. She got married because my grandfather had all kinds of entanglements with women and brought home a stepmother. I'm sure my parents had a religious wedding.

I don't remember my father, because he died in August 1917 of heart disease, when I was only three. In those days, barrels were rolled into the cellar on a double-forked wooden rail, and one barrel fell on his heart. He was taken to Budapest, but he died there, and was brought back by train. I know he's buried in a casket in Nagykaroly, because only this could be closed hermetically for transport. My mother had a very hard life: she remained a widow with three children in 1917, but fortunately they had a store manager who managed the whole business.