

## Lipot Gunst And His Family



This is a very, very old photograph. I don't know how it survived for a century and a half. I'm not completely sure where and when the picture was taken. These are my great-grandparents with their eleven children. My grandfather, Lipot Gunst, is the second on the right in the row standing. Aside from my great-grandparents, I recognize Uncle Berti, who was called Bertalan. He's the boy standing next to great-grandfather.

My paternal great-grandfather was a shoemaker by profession. He was called Izrael Gunst. He was born in Albertirsa, and he worked there. He had eleven children. The first few were born in Irsa, then my great-grandfather moved for who knows what reason to Szentes. From then on he had his workshop and business there. Not only did he make shoes to measure, but also for the warehouse, and he sold them. All the while, he raised eleven children. There were huge age differences between the children, so some had already grown up and left home when the last child was born. The interesting thing is that there were ten boys and one girl. My grandfather only kept in touch with a few of his siblings, perhaps not that closely with them either, so I don't know anything about most of them.

The youngest child, Berti, became famous, relatively famous. When Lajos Kossuth was exiled after the freedom fight was defeated, he lived the last part of his life in Italy, near Turin and was preparing to write his memoirs. He needed a secretary who could translate and who could get hold of the raw materials. Kossuth asked his contacts in Pest to find him this kind of young man. Uncle Berci, who had legal training, and worked then as a freelancer for some Pest paper, was given the job. He went abroad, and was Kossuth's secretary for three years, and his memoirs were written in that time. He is even mentioned in the Szentes High School yearbook - since he attended this school, as did my father, and then me - as a famous old pupil, Bertalan Gunst, Lajos Kossuth's secretary. Then as a young man living in London, Uncle Berci married a girl from Budapest, yet their wedding was in Szentes - he so clung to his Szentes identity, and those in Szentes considered him that, too. Generally, our family is very close to their roots.