

Erzsebet And Emanuel Gruber



I think that this photo was taken right after my parents' wedding in 1924 in Brassó. This is my father, Emanuel Gruber, as a young bank clerk and this is his wife, my mother, Erzsebet Gruber, whose Jewish name was Rachel. My father enrolled at the Faculty of Law in 1919 and attended it as a 'field-goer' [commuter], which means that he didn't go to classes every day. They were called field-goers, that is, people who 'went to the field' [went to work] during their studies. He graduated from law but he didn't pursue a career in law. In 1922-23 my father went to Brassó, where the Albina Bank opened a branch office; he was offered a job there and worked there as a bank-clerk. At that time it was quite a high position, he had the right to sign papers on behalf of the director. My father was among those who introduced Zionism to Brassó with Ritter. They remained friends for life, all the more so, since both of them settled in Brassó. There was an organization called Barisia, which was mainly an organization for students and Zionist intellectuals. Members of the Barisia imitated a little the German Burschenschaften [fraternity], they laid quite an emphasis on sports: they went in for sports, they did fencing. My father did gymnastics until his old age but didn't go in for competitions; when he got up in the morning, he did push-ups. In Barisia he was mainly involved in educating the youth, he held theoretical lectures for them, usually in Hungarian. He mostly told them stories of Jews who stood up for their Jewishness, from the rise of David to the arts of Solomon. I think that my father knew my mother's older brother Simon from the Zionist organization in Kolozsvár and my parents met through him. I know that Lea, whom everybody called Lotte, was about a year and a half older than my mother. My father told me that at first my mother's family, especially my grandmother, wanted him to marry Lotte, as it was the custom to marry off the oldest daughter of a family first. But my father didn't really like her, he liked my mother, so he married her. It wasn't the parents who agreed on this but my father and mother. My mother finished the Marianum secondary school in Kolozsvár, married my father at the age of 22 and they settled in Brassó. They were married by a rabbi but I am not sure whether it was in Kolozsvár or Brassó. I know that they were on good terms with the Neolog rabbi, Deutsch, in Brassó but we were Orthodox and our rabbi was called Sperber. My older sister was born in 1925, one year after they got married, and I was born in 1926. My mother was a housewife for some time.