

Stepan Neuman With His Wife Adel Neuman And His Brother Frank Newman



This is me on the left, my fiancée Adel Takacs and my brother Frantisek Neuman. My brother and Adel became very good friends. My brother kept one copy of this photograph in Australia throughout all these years. This photo was taken in Uzhgorod in October 1945.

I was so happy when my brother returned home in July 1945. In May 1944 he was sent to Buchenwald from Auschwitz. Frantisek had severe dystrophy and the doctors were afraid he was going to die, but he was young and overcame the disease. He was hoping to find somebody at home and refused to go elsewhere. So we met. My brother told me very little about his imprisonment in the camp. He wanted to forget it.

My brother stayed in Uzhgorod for a few months. I was hoping he would stay with me, but he decided otherwise. He didn't want to live in the Soviet regime. Before the middle of 1946 it was possible to move elsewhere from Subcarpathia. Frantisek moved to Czechoslovakia and from there - to Australia, where he changed his name to Frank Newman.

I knew the family of my future wife before the war. Adel was just a child then. Her parents Maria and Janos Takacs lived nearby. They were Hungarians and lived in Slovakia. They were Catholic. They were poor and could hardly make ends meet. They had two children: older son Ernest and daughter Adel, born in 1929. They were born in a village. The family moved to Uzhgorod in the early 1930s.

When I returned to Uzhgorod Adel lived with her mother. Ernest moved to Czechoslovakia shortly after Uzhgorod was liberated and the father disappeared at the front. They had a very hard life and could hardly afford to buy wood in winter while I was living in an empty house. I had no idea about housekeeping, I had to go to work, and routinely issues regarding the house and my everyday life were becoming a problem. I couldn't cook or wash and I had no time for this. I came home from work late and went to bed immediately.

Then somebody got to know that I was rarely at home and there was nobody else in the house and they began to steal furniture and other belongings. So I told Maria and her daughter to move in with me. 'You won't pay me for living here, vice versa, I will be giving money for food to you, and you will probably cook something for me, too.' They moved in with me.

I was 22 and Adel was 16. We spent the evenings together. Maria and Adel were my family, or the illusion of a family, until Maria's husband returned. The Americans had taken him in captivity, and he came to Uzhgorod in 1945. Janos and Maria decided to move to Czechoslovakia, where their son lived, in the town of Volkovce. He had gotten married and they had a baby.

When they began to pack, I understood that I couldn't live without Adel and I proposed to her. We got married on 10th November 1945. We had a civil ceremony and then had a wedding dinner. My brother Frantisek was at the wedding. After the wedding Adel's parents left.