

Bernard And Adela Iszakovics



This is a photo of my maternal grandparents, Adela and Bernard Iszakovics, taken in Odorheiu Secuiesc. It was taken right before they were deported, in 1943. [Editor's note: The deportations in Transylvania took place in April-May of 1944.] I think they already knew that they would be deported, and therefore sent this photo to us, in Bucharest.

My grandfather was born in Sighetul Marmatiei in 1875, but he spent most of his life in Odorheiu [Odorheiu-Secuiesc]. He spoke Hungarian. He was Neolog and not very religious, but he went to the synagogue on Saturdays and on the high holidays. He was a watchmaker and he also owned a jewelry shop in the center of town. He imported luxury items from Switzerland. He ordered them from an intermediary who went to Switzerland and brought what my grandfather had asked for: that and that many gold snuff-boxes, that and that many gold necklaces, diamond rings and earrings, silver candlesticks and so on. He didn't do the handwork in watch mending himself; he had an employee who did it. My grandfather mostly dealt in selling jewelry.

My grandmother helped him run the shop: she had graduated from a business high school in Budapest and did the bookkeeping for him. She was born in Targu-Secuiesc in 1885, and she spoke Hungarian as well. Grandmother was Neolog, like my grandfather, she didn't observe the kashrut, but she lit the candles every Friday evening and went to the synagogue on the high holidays.

During World War II my grandparents were deported to Auschwitz. Only my grandfather came back from Auschwitz when the war was over, and he stayed in Odorheiu. After he returned, he worked as a watchmaker in Odorheiu; he was employed in a little workshop. Grandfather visited us in Brasov very rarely; I remember him as a kind man, friendly and gentle. My sister and I were always happy to hear he was coming, but he stayed for no more than a week. He died in Odorheiu in 1955, and I think he was buried in the municipal cemetery, there was no Jewish cemetery there. I don't think anyone recited the Kaddish. I was at his funeral, but I don't remember it; it was too long ago.