

My Parents, Serena And Jozef



This is a photograph of my father, Jozef Wagner, along with my mother, Serena. The photograph is from the beginning of the 1930s, and is most likely taken somewhere in Bratislava.

My father prayed every morning, and I had to pray with him. He didn't make a move without a cap. We strictly observed Friday and Saturday. This always upset me. The other boys would go play soccer, and we'd go to the synagogue. My brother and I had to go there no matter what, whether it was summer or winter. To sit there and pray. We conformed of course, as we wanted to obey our parents. My brother and I weren't really that devout, we were just listening to our parents. If we had had our way, we would've preferred to play soccer. We couldn't even light a lamp [Sabbath: during the Sabbath, 39 main work activities are forbidden, upon which injunctions on others are based. "The lighting of lights" belongs among forbidden activities - Editor's note].

My Mom led a kosher household [5]. No ham, no pork, nothing like that. We kept strict kosher. On Friday, Mom would prepare shoulet. She'd boil beans and I had to run with a full pot, to Obchodna Street, to the baker. The baker's name was Heller. Every Friday I arrived there with a pot of shoulet, and on Saturday I had to pick it up for lunch. Mom made it mainly with goose meat. For the Sabbath, we also had barches. Our mom took care of everything around food preparation.