

Bella Katz, Braha Moskovits And Blanka Freund



In this photo you can see, starting from right, my mother, Bella Katz, my grandmother Braha Moskovits, and one of my mother's sisters, Blanka Freund. The photo was taken in 1935 in Halmeu. When I met her, Grandmother Braha still lived in the town of Halmeu, located near Satu Mare. She strictly observed the religious rules, but these maternal grandparents were not as devout as the paternal ones. My maternal grandmother dressed as tradition requested. She wore a wig imitating natural hair, but every time she went to the synagogue she had to cover her head with a kerchief

that wasn't necessarily black - on holidays, it was white. My grandmother wore a wig till the day she died. My grandmother's house in Halmeu had three rooms: a guest room that was nicer than the other two, a large living room and a third room with four beds; there were also a kitchen with a stove and an attic. My grandmother didn't keep animals. She had a large, beautiful garden, separated from the courtyard, with many flowers, and an orchard. My grandmother didn't have servants; nor did my relatives, despite their having a better position than us. The wives stayed at home and did all the work. In my grandmother's town, Halmeu, there weren't only Jews, there were also many Romanians. But I remember my grandmother's neighbors were Jews. On the opposite side there was a house, behind there was a sort of chateau and in front there was a garden. In general, the neighbors got on very well with one another. Right now, I don't remember whether my grandmother would tell us things or stories, but I know she was highly respected by the entire community; she was like a mother to them all. She was greatly esteemed by the people and she was like a town's sage. Anyone who would set foot in her house would get a treat. My mother, Bella's maiden name was Moskovits, and she was born in 1900. She came from Halmeu, which was not far away from Satu Mare. She got married to my father, Moise Katz, in 1918, and it was an arranged marriage. By the time the photo was taken, she already had us, the kids: myself, Sigmund, Eugen and Rashela. I remember my mother always dressed according to the fashion of the time. She was a rather beautiful woman; at least, this is how I thought of her, as all children think of their mothers. She was tall and had a beautiful chest. My mother had more education than other women. I believe she had gone through the elementary school. Her mother tongue was Yiddish, but she also spoke Hungarian very well. After she got married, she read less than before, as she was busy raising the children and taking care of the house. What she usually read was not literature, but had more to do with religion, with raising children, and with the laws that had to be kept in a family. She read books in Hebrew and Yiddish.