

Egon Lovith



This picture of me was taken on the ship, when I was going with my mother to Mexico in 1926. I am standing by the handrail of the ship and there is a canvas so the wind wouldn't blow in and the rain would stay off the deck. It was autumn already and I remember the ocean was quite stormy and the wind was pretty cold. You can tell how happy I was about the sun and they put me on the sunny side to make it a good picture. One of the amateur photographers on board took this picture. The sailors always played with the children on the ship when they had some time off. I learned from them how to cut figures out of oranges and also how to draw a funny Chaplin figure. They all taught things like that to the kids. I remember one of the sailors put me between the ropes so I could hardly be seen amongst them. Then he talked to me and I always got something yummy, usually some fruit. This is how the sailor passed his time and I was a talkative kid. In Kolozsvár my

maternal grandfather opened a watch shop for my father already in 1920 in the Malom [Miller's] street (today Baritiu Street, in the city center). In Romania, by 1922, the fascist movement established itself among the students and there were already fascist protests. There was a terrible incident in 1923. It was a student protest, they were walking from the Hungarian theater to Malom Street. That part of Kolozsvár was already built up and there were lots of Jewish shops and Jewish signs. When the marching students, who were delighted to have won Transylvania back - this also belonged to the way of fascist thinking and extreme nationalists - saw the Jewish name on my father's sign they broke the shop window, got into the store and destroyed, plundered everything. They beat up my father so badly that he was brought to hospital. Once my father recovered, he decided that he wouldn't stay here but leave the country. So he took whatever money was left, arranged to get his passport and a ship ticket for himself and then he left. I suspect that in his eyes, after living in Switzerland and Russia, Mexico wasn't the most attractive place and I think he probably wanted to go to New York, to America. Most likely he ran out of money and that's why he only got as far as Mexico. But I could be wrong and he could have talked to someone on the ship who might have spoken to him about the possible prospect of being a watchmaker in Mexico. I was born in 1923 when my father was already in Mexico. Two or three years later my father collected enough money so that he could send us ship tickets. I went to Mexico with my mother in 1926. My father was waiting for us with a rented furnished apartment.