

Alexander Schvalb And Maria Schvalbova



This photograph was taken in Presov, approximately in the year 1955. The photo shows my parents Alexander Schvalb and Maria Schvalbova, nee Kemplerova.

My father was born in 1887 in Presov. First he studied at a well-known evangelical college in town, where he got his high school diploma. After the end of his studies at this school, he left for Budapest. There he studied at the medical faculty of the University of Lorant Eotvos. From Budapest he returned to Presov. In time he opened his own office and worked as a general practitioner. His patients came from a mixed society, meaning both Jews and non-Jews. Similarly, there were people from higher circles, but also workers.

My mother was born in 1900 in Trstena na Orave. Trstena was a typical Slovak town. What this means is that my mother's native tongue was also Slovak. But she also spoke Hungarian well.

If I had to think about my father's interests, I would say that his hobby was listening to folk songs. Always, when he returned home, he would put on a record. He listened to nice, sentimental melodies. He liked this very much. Of course he and my mother also attended balls. However, his work didn't allow him to have much fun. Often it would happen that he'd be called away from a ball, or the movie theater, to a patient, and he'd have to go. That's the difference between then and now. Now, when a doctor finishes his eight hours at work, and isn't on call, he's a free man. At one time it wasn't like that. Poor Father, how many times he had to go. I remember these things very well. Often people would arrive at 2 or 3am, ring and call my father to come see someone who was sick. They didn't come only from the town itself, but also the surrounding quarters. For example, there was a workers' quarter here, called Argentina. Father would get dressed and go.