

Jozsef Grunstein And His Family Before Deportation



The photo was taken in 1943, and it shows my husband's family with his little boy, Erno and his wife, Helen. His son has curly hair, he looks like a girl.

The photo was taken in Marosvasarhely, at that time they lived there. It was taken when he had leave from work service, and later his family sent it to him. It is written on its back side: 'With love, mommy and Erno'. My husband preserved and took a good care of these pictures with his former family.

My husband went to school in Bethlen; he was studying a lot using electric light, until he went blind. All this happened when he was some fifteen-sixteen years old; so they took him to Kolozsvar, and he was operated. They told him he must stop learning. Thus he learnt to work in leather, but I don't know where. Before the war he worked already in leather in Bethlen, then he moved to Marosvasarhely. Here he was selling broadcloth in a private shop; he met his first wife, Helen Grunstein there. She was from Beszterce. In Kolozsvar she stayed at an uncle, who raised her, then she came to Marosvasarhely to work, she was a clerk in a hardware shop. In the meantime, in 1935 my husband was enrolled in the army. He was in the Romanian army in Szatmarnemeti; he was twenty-one at that time. He was allowed to leave for one day, when they got married. After he demobilized - this was around 1937 -, they lived in Marosvasarhely in the Cuza Voda street, in his wife's house until deportation. He had a son, he was called Erno, and was born in 1940. [Editor's note: According to photo number Erno Grunstein was born approximately in March 1941.] They were deported together with the wife and daughter of Marci. My husband and my brother-in-law, Marci were taken to work service; the two of them came back, but their wives and children perished in Auschwitz.

The forced labor camp was in Maramarossziget [in fact in the Maramures region], up in the mountains; they were digging out bunkers. From Nagybanya they were taken to Borsa, then to Maramarossziget, they were liberated there. There were thirty-two in the camp who were from Marosvasarhely, and they were all good friends. My husband was working in the canteen; every

evening he was returning [to the camp] with a rucksack on his back, he was carrying bread and food for all the thirty-two people.