

Piroska Hamos With Relatives



This is Etel (far right) and me (far left). I think this picture was taken at Aunt Netka's, and this must be the maid, in whose lap Gyurika, Aunt Netka's eldest son, is sitting. The picture was taken in Balassagyarmat, and as far as I can see, Etel must have been around four or five, which means that it was in 1916-1917. Aunt Netka was my mother's sister. Among her siblings, I know the most about Aunt Netka, because we spent every summer at their place. Her husband, Sandor Weinberger was a merchant. They lived in Balassagyarmat for a long time, and they owned a textile shop there: a draperies and haberdashery. Sometimes Aunt Netka was in the shop, if she had to help something, or because uncle Sandor had to go somewhere, but mostly, her husband was there. It was not a big shop, they didn't have any employees. In Balassagyarmat, they had their own house, but before that they lived in a rented flat. There were three rooms in the house: grandmother lived in one room, the parents in another one, and in the third one, the five children. When we went there in my childhood, this was how it was. They had a beautiful dining room, very nicely furnished; it had a really dark color, maybe even black, with a glass show-case. They didn't have a garden, just a little courtyard. Aunt Netka had help, Aunt Mari. She was a many-skirted peasant woman. She cleaned the house, and did the laundry. But Aunt Netka cooked. I don't remember, where she lived in their old flat, but when they moved to their house, then in the back, there was a room, or maybe it was a room with a kitchen, and Aunt Mari lived there. She was with them for decades. Even, when they already lived in Budapest, she used to visit them frequently. They were well-off, for a while. I think, they moved to Budapest because the shop went bankrupt. In Budapest they made men's shirts at home, Aunt Netka, and the two girls. Her husband dealt with the transportation and administration. When Aunt Netka and her family were already living in Budapest, I was already married, and had children, I got out of this close family circle, so I don't know so much about these things. As far as I remember the husband of this aunt was a son of a rabbi. They kept a fully kosher household. I don't remember exactly when, but there were milky days, when there were only meals without any meat, I remember that much. For what occasion, I don't recall. And Esther's fasting, they kept everything. They were religious. They were not orthodox, although they are buried in the orthodox cemetery, so they didn't have payes.[editor's note: thus they were orthodox, but not Hasid]. My mother's sister wore a wig. When they moved to

Budapest in the 1930's, she didn't wear it anymore, because of her children. After the war, Aunty Netka didn't wear a wig anymore. She let her hair grow long, she had beautiful snow-white hair. When she went out, she wore a hat. Even with a wig she used to wear a hat. Aunty Netka had five children: three girls and two boys. Her eldest daughter, Magda, was ten months younger than me, the youngest one, Agi, is 75 now, I think. We loved each other very much. Magda was a friend to both my sister and me. All five stayed alive after the war. Aunty Netka was in the ghetto, I believe. Her husband probably was too. When I came home, he had already died. Aunty Netka lived with her children. She died in 1965. She is buried in the orthodox cemetery, just the two of them, she and her husband, all the other relatives are already buried in the Israelite cemetery in Budapest, because her children were not at all religious, but let's say, even the children observed the high holidays.