

Magdolna Palmai At The Central Statistical Office



This picture was taken when I worked at the Central Statistical Office in Budapest. My colleagues and I are celebrating that the first volume of the census was published in 1961. In this picture I am in the center. When I came home to Hungary I got to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. That was heaven for me. They employed 2,000 people, then this number kept going down. Everyone had a code number. Based on this we had to fill out some tests, and that way they dismissed the people. But I got among the first 10. We had to take on three shifts many times, because when the materials came in after the census, those had to be processed, there was no getting away from it. First we coded, then we punched, then they put the data in the computer. My bosses had compiled an aid, from which we encoded, and we had to help in this, we made tables for the questions. It occurred that the boss told us, 'Listen up, I don't care if you do it now or during the night, but this and this plan has to be on my desk by 8 in the morning.' Then ten of us put our heads together, and we had the material on his desk on time. At the Hungarian Central Statistical Office there were some who had been rebuked for something in 1956, but of course they didn't get too big a punishment, since they could work in the office. I had a colleague, who had just graduated from high school, and an agricultural engineer, who was almost of retirement age also worked with us - so there were people of all sorts, rank and age there. At the finance department they employed a girl from the Teleki family, who was a very nice woman. The three years while I was there was the nicest period of my life. When I left, my colleagues bid farewell to me with a poem, and they made me a certificate of merit. In 1961 they wrote me a congratulatory poem for my name day. It happened once that I was the Russian interpreter of a Bulgarian for a month, then they wrote me another poem for my name day. This is why I liked being here, though we had to work hard, if it was needed we counted day and night, because the data of the census had to be processed in a year. When the first volume was published we organized a big celebration, which you can see in the picture.