

Gustav Abeles And Adela Abelesova



This is a picture of my maternal grandparents Gustav Abeles and Adela Abelesova [nee Drillova] when they were young. This photo was taken in Vienna, probably at the end of the 19th century. My grandfather came from Mikulov. He only had elementary education. He used to dress like anyone else, there was nothing special about his appearance. I think my grandfather had a shop where he sold soap and old clothes. That was before I was born. The shop didn't do very well. I

remember that my grandfather worked as a bank clerk after I was born. My grandparents were also supported by my father. My grandfather had a beautiful garden; he loved flowers. I think he had someone to look after the garden, but I'm not sure about it because the garden wasn't next to their house. It was quite a big garden though, and he mainly grew flowers and also fruit; wine and fruit. There was a fig tree in his garden and we ate the figs, which is quite unusual in our country. My grandfather didn't have any animals because the garden was located in an urban part of Mikulov. He only had a dog, a Doberman called Cezar. My grandmother came from a little village called Genzeldorf, or something like that, in Austria. [There is a village called Genzersdorf in Lower Austria.] Her name was Adela Abelesova, nee Drillova. I don't know when she was born. She certainly only had elementary education, which was usual in those times. She moved to Mikulov after the marriage with my grandfather. My grandmother was a pretty woman and very elegant. She didn't wear anything typically Jewish. She was a housewife and was very charitable. She worked as the president of the Organization of Jewish Women in Mikulov. They helped poor Jews: there were many of them in Mikulov, but nobody was hungry thanks to this organization. My grandmother had a non-Jewish woman to help her at home, who did the washing and the cleaning. She lived in the house of my grandparents' and some time later her mother and her sister came to Mikulov as well. They got a little house from my father. They could live there without paying anything. The housemaid's sister was a nun, but then she got tuberculosis and couldn't stay in the monastery any more. My grandmother was a perfect cook. She often went on a holiday to Austria - usually she went alone because my grandfather wasn't very sociable. My grandmother, on the opposite, was outgoing and cheerful and traveled a lot. She had many relatives in Austria, especially in Vienna, so she usually visited some of them in Austria, but she also went to the spa in Karlovy Vary. My grandparents lived in a very old house in Emil Schweinburg Street. It was a Jewish street, it had been the so-called ghetto in the middle ages. After the reign of Joseph II Jews were allowed to move out of the ghetto, but most of them stayed in that area. My grandparents lived in this street, too, but my parents didn't live there any more. My grandparents lived on the first floor. Their floor was divided into two parts - the front part and the back part. There was a living room, a bedroom, a kitchen, a pantry and a hall in the back part, and there were two other rooms in the front part. We slept in those rooms when we visited our grandparents. They had a stove, which they heated with coal. They had running water in the house, which was quite common. What was very special though was their bathroom. There was a bath tub in there and a bathroom stove, so if they lit the stove, they also had hot water. That was very unusual in those times. They weren't kosher, but they observed some of the main Jewish traditions. They went to the synagogue on high holidays. And my grandmother also went there on Saturdays. They celebrated seder on Pesach. We were invited along with all the other Teltscher children. There were usually more than ten people. It was very nice. The whole family was sitting around the table. My grandfather conducted the seder, he read Jewish history [the Haggadah] and we ate bitter spices during some passages and drank wine. The children got wine with water. Then the youngest child asked the four questions in Hebrew [the mah nishtanah] - we learned that at school. There was a festive dinner. We ate some traditional food. I remember soup with gnocchi made from matzah flour, which I liked very much. Then, after dinner, there should traditionally be some more prayers and songs, but we didn't stick to that. We only had dinner. My grandparents also had a festive meal before Yom Kippur, but again, it was only dinner, they didn't observe any other laws.