

Oto Konstein With His Maternal Grandparents, Mother And Sister



I don't know the year this photo was taken, but it must have been in 1930s.

It shows my maternal grandparents, my mother, my sister and me.

My maternal great-grandparents originate from Hungary and Medimurje, the northeastern part of Croatia. I don't know where exactly my maternal grandparents Leopold and Malvina Heimer were born, but they lived in Cakovec most of their lives.

Actually, they lived in the same street where my parents, my sister and I lived, so I spent a lot of time with them when I was very young.

My grandfather Leopold Heimer was born in 1874 and he worked in a textile factory, a Jewish factory called Neumann

[Neumann is today's factory called Cateks, a well-known Croatian artificial leather factory].

They used to produce raw textile. I don't know what exactly he did there, but from my mother's telling I remember that he was known to be a hard-working man.

My grandmother Malvina, born around 1877, was a housewife. Like my paternal grandparents, my maternal grandparents were not very religious. From what

I remember at my grandparent's home, holidays were observed by going to the synagogue and eating nice meals at home, but Shabbat or kashrut was not observed.

They fasted for Yom Kippur and observed high holidays such as Rosh Hashana, they lit candles for Hanukah, but did not do much else.

I don't recall any particular stories they told me; I was 7 when my grandfather died, and 9 when my grandmother died, so I don't recall many details. I remember that both grandfather and grandmother looked very old to me.

Even though they died young, at the age of around 60, they looked older than they actually were, as if they grew old before their time. I recall that my grandfather was very ill, and he was in Zagreb in hospital.

It must have been in 1935 or 1936 when my mother and I went to visit him in the hospital. That was the first time I came to Zagreb, and although I don't remember much clearly, I remember that I was very excited.

Another thing I remember was that I was ill when either my grandfather or grandmother died, I cannot recall exactly who, but I recall looking through the window at the funeral procession. It was a Jewish funeral.

They are both buried at the Jewish section of Cakovec cemetery. Luckily, neither my grandfather nor my grandmother lived to experience the horrors of the war.

My grandfather Leopold died in 1936, and my grandmother Malvina died in 1938.

Both my mother Vilma and my young sister Tea were taken to Birkenau and murdered in 1944.