

Magdalena Berger And Her Brother Andrija Grossberger



My brother Andrija and me. The photo was probably taken at the Mandic photographic studios in Sombor in 1933. Sombor was not a large Jewish community. Most of the 1,000 Jews that lived in the town belonged to the Neolog (Conservative) community. There were some Orthodox Jews but they were a minority and were in general much poorer than the other Jews. They did not have a big

synagogue, only a few shtibls. There was a large Neolog synagogue in the center of Sombor, close to our house, where we were members. I would go to the synagogue with my aunt and grandmother, and we sat in our permanent seats, on the left side near the ark. From there I could see my father sitting in the men's section. The service was traditional and all in Hebrew and the congregation could follow and participate. During the Torah reading the cantor would call out in German (or maybe it was Yiddish, I'm not sure): 'Who has a contribution for the chevra kadishah?' There was no hall in the synagogue so there was no socializing after the service. When my brother had his bar mitzvah, the family's guests and relatives came back to the house after the service for kiddush. In this community of modest means, it was not customary to provide lunch for the guests. I remember that my brother received some gifts, including 10 of the same pen sets.