

## Anna Knezova Schönbrunova's Friends By The River In Pukanec



This photo was taken in the town of Pukanec, by the river, where local people used to go swimming. The photo shows my wife's friends, who helped me very much during the war, when I was in hiding. I don't remember their names any more. Of course, my future wife, maiden name Anna Krajcova, helped me a lot as well.

I met her in Bratislava by the Danube, where the Propeler [a former river steamboat that was converted to a restaurant] is these days. It was after lunch on Saturday. A friend of mine and I were sitting on a bench, and we saw a pretty girl walking around there. As I later found out, they were making a hat for her nearby, and she was waiting for it to be finished. On Sunday after lunch I set out to visit one mixed family in Lamac. They had a very pretty girl, Irenka. They were named the Picks. When I got there the mother and daughter were having a picnic. It insulted me, as they had taken the father, a Jew, to a concentration camp, and they were having a picnic. I said to myself, there aren't the right partners for me. I turned around and left. On the way back I laid down on a meadow and fell asleep. Later some soldier walked by with a girl. They unintentionally woke me up. I looked over, and walking behind them was the girl I'd seen the day before on the riverbank. I started talking to her, as there was no other way of getting to know her. During the time of the Slovak State, I never used to hide my origins. I always did this, regardless of who I was talking to, except for the police. Well, and in the beginning she didn't understand what I meant by it. She was from the town of Pukanec, from central Slovakia. She was surprised by my opinions. She even asked me: 'The strange way you're speaking, are you Spanish, or Italian?' I answered: 'No, I'm a Jew.' That's how we met. She was a seamstress. Of course, I walked her to the building where she lived. She went up to her apartment and brought me down some bread with lard and cracklings. It tasted very good to me, as I was hungry. That was the beginning. The we used to meet. My wife, back then still my girlfriend, helped me very much later.