

The Friedmann Family



This is my family. In the front sitting are my father Ferenc Friedmann and my mother Aranka Friedmann, nee Pollak. To her left is my sister Bozsi Spiegel, nee Friedmann and I'm sitting to the left of my dad. Behind us standing from right to left are: Gyula Krausz, my sister Piri's first husband, next to him is Piri Deri, nee Friedmann, then my third sister Rozsi Schwarz and the last is her husband Sandor Schwartz. The photo was taken in Eger in 1935. All my sisters finished the four classes of middle school. My oldest sister Piri also finished two years of commercial school. This was a commercial high school, where nuns taught. And it was very expensive. If someone wanted to work in an office then she, like my sister, finished two years of commercial school and then she could become an employee [in an office]. There was a car dealer in Eger - there was only one at that time, there were hardly any cars; we went everywhere on foot, it was a small town, we could walk from one end to the other in two minutes - and Piri worked for this car dealer. My parents had more money for the education of my older sisters, and by the time it was my turn, the money was gone. Sewing was almost the only trade that we could always do for a living for sure. So, they decided that the girls should learn sewing. Girls didn't really have the possibility to learn any other trade at that time, especially if they were Jewish. Bozsi worked for a family, acquaintances of ours - people often learned a trade through acquaintances. It was very good that we didn't have to go to an unknown person to learn the trade; everybody new Dad and everybody liked him. So, these were really the good old times. All my sisters knew how to sew except for Piri, who worked in an office. She couldn't even sew a button on, she struggled with everything that had to do with sewing. Bozsi sewed for sale, and Rozsi was at home after finishing middle school and helped Mom. She made beautiful children's clothes. I have no idea where she learnt this, she probably just picked it up somewhere. She never learnt it professionally. When I finished middle school in 1929, my parents apprenticed me to a man, also a tailor, who was an acquaintance of my father, but I didn't like it there at all. He was a Jewish tailor from abroad, not from Hungary. He was a women's tailor. I was there for only a very short time because I kicked up no end of a racket at home about not liking to be there. But I still learned how to sew, since we all knew this trade kind of instinctively because Dad was a tailor. The Greiners, my husband's family, lived in the same street

as us. I went to work for Dora Greiner. Three or four of us worked in her workshop. Dora was our boss. She was very strict; she used to upbraid me all the time before she became my sister-in-law. After her brother married me, I used to tell her, 'You were such a nasty boss, it was horrible'. I worked there as an apprentice for a couple of years and I didn't get a salary; we were happy that they took me on in the first place. After I finished my apprenticeship, I got a salary for my work. But we didn't have set working hours. We were told at what time we had to start in the morning. I can't remember what it was any more. I guess it must have been 7 or 8 in the morning. And in the evening we had to stay until we finished the fancy work on a piece or whatever we were doing. As long as the Greiner girls lived in Eger, I worked in their workshop.