

Karlo And Teodor Kovac With Their Parents



This is me, my mother, Olga Kovac, my brother, Karlo Kovac, and my father Arpad Kovac. The photo was taken in 1925 but I'm not sure where.

I have one brother, Karlo, who is nine years older than I. He was born in Titel in 1914, three weeks before World War I broke out. Karlo went to university and became a lawyer. He lives in Novi Sad.

I was born on 24th April 1923, in Novi Knezevac, which is a fairly small place in Banat. It's a district town though. Back then there were no boulevards in Novi Knezevac, it was paved like the villages in Voivodina [with cobble-stones]. Electricity was supplied periodically. At the beginning there was only electricity from noon to midnight, or to 10 or 11 o'clock in the evening; later there was electricity all day.

I don't remember what my favorite subject was in school. In the 1st and 2nd grade there was only one teacher; he was a good teacher. He died not too many years ago, probably when he was 98 or 99. The 3rd grade was taught by a female teacher, and the 4th by another one. The teacher from the 4th grade lived long, too, when she died I was still working, but I was about to retire. They were good teachers. I had some classes outside school; my parents made me learn music, but they were quickly convinced that it was useless, since I showed no interest.

I had no problems in school for being a Jew. In our class it was the same as in Novi Sad: there were Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks, Germans and Jews. Several of us were Jews. As a child, I don't remember anti-Semitism; that was long before Hitler. I remember, in my birth-place the store was just opposite the house where we lived. The owner was a Serb merchant whose wife was half German, half Romanian from Romanian Banat. She spoke poor Serbian, and she would often get together with my mother and they would speak German with each other.

Before the war I attended the school in my birth-place, there were only four grades in elementary school. The 8-year high school I attended here, in Novi Sad. Novi Knezevac is 130 kilometers away from Novi Sad, so it was impossible to travel daily. I lived in Novi Sad at my maternal grandparents'. When the war broke out in Novi Sad [April 1941] I was a graduate; we graduated during the occupation.