

With My Parents In The Yard



This photograph from 1938 was taken in the yard of our house in Piestany. From left to right am I, Ladislav Urban, my mother Alzbeta Urban, and my father Alexander Urban. My mother and I are sitting on a pile of wood that was used to heat the store. Behind Dad is the entrance to the cellar. Besides this house, we also had a villa not far from town, which our father had bought from the well-known painter Janko Alexy.

The building where we lived had been finished in 1842. I know this because a few years ago we found a cast-iron plaque walled-up there that said this. Our apartment was upstairs, and downstairs my father had his textile store. We always had running water as well as electricity. The building belonged to our family. The store is there to this day. We recently enlarge the building. We added another floor. Currently some of the space is being rented to the companies Allianz and Home Credit. During my youth, there was a warehouse behind my father's textile store, and then a tailor's shop, where Mr. Goldsteinova sewed; later she changed her name to Galova. Mrs. Goldsteinova sewed custom shirts and men's underwear. Her daughter graduated from medical school, and after the war worked as a doctor.

Before the war, my father bought a villa near Piestany from Janko Alexy [Alexy, Janko (1894 – 1970) was a Slovak writer, painter and publicist – Editor's note]. The villa was in the direction of Cervena Vez. Before that, Janko Alexy had had a studio there. Trainees, painters, used to come visit him. We lived in that villa for some time. I used to go to school from there on a bicycle. Together with my father; he'd go to work, and I to school. I'd leave the bicycle at my father's work, and after lunch we'd got home together.

The villa was by the Vah River. We had a kayak stand by the river, along with a dock. My mother used to go kayaking with Mrs. Majercakova a lot. Her husband, Dr. Eugen Majercak, was a lawyer for the Piestany spas. When the anti-Jewish laws [9](#) began coming out, we had to give up the villa. My father came to an agreement with Mr. Alexy that he'd buy the villa back from us. It then became a conspiratorial house for partisans. We'll come back to this chapter, as during the war we hid out here for a long time.