

Oto Konstein With His Housemaid Matilda



In this photo, I am together with Matilda Sinko.

I came to visit her after the war in Prelog, the town where she was from. It was a very emotional visit, I think the first one after the war.

Matilda was our housemaid and she lived in Cakovec with my family before the war. Since I was the only one who survived the war, it was very emotional from both my side and her side when we reunited.

Matilda Sinko was a housemaid who started working with my maternal grandparents when she was only 13 years old. After my grandmother died, Matilda came to stay with my parents, my sister and me.

Matilda was a wonderful, intelligent person; she spoke German, Hungarian and of course Croatian fluently, she had a beautiful handwriting, and made beautiful needlework.

Apart from cooking, cleaning and helping in the household, Matilda played with my sister and me. She didn't have family of her own, so she considered us her own children; she loved us and we loved her.

Matilda was treated as if she was a member of our family, and long after the war was over, I considered her as my grandmother. It was customary for Jewish families in Cakovec, and I suppose elsewhere, to have housemaids that stayed with a single family and that became a part of that

family.

Although she was Catholic and not Jewish, she learned Jewish traditions and customs by living with us. When the war started, she went to her hometown Prelog and lived there until sometime in 1980s when she died.

My wife and me went to visit her in Prelog, just a few days before she died, but then we didn't expect that she would die so soon.