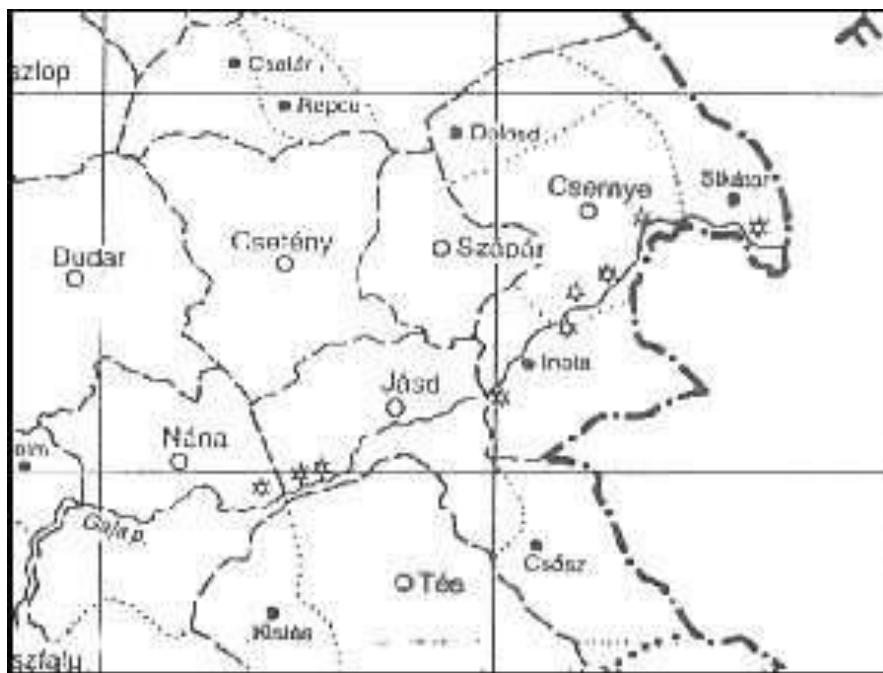


Background Information on the Nemes, Barát, Kovács, Rigó and the Szondi, Tolnai, Seres Families

Esther Nemes and her siblings were brought up in the ancient town of Inota (it had been a major Roman crossroads) which now has been incorporated into the city of Várpalota. Her ancestors, for about 100 years, had owned mills in the area, and had moved around considerably buying, operating, and selling their businesses. Therefore, it is more difficult to keep track of their whereabouts in the 19th century than earlier – when families stayed-put in one town for generations. In fact, Eszter was the first family member born in Inota.

The Nemes, Barát, Kovács, and Rigó families were Protestants, usually associated with the Reformed faith. But, religion did not seem to be important to them. Many family marriages seemed to be “marriages of convenience” ... aimed at furthering the business interests of their extended family. Family members were baptized and buried in whichever Protestant church existed in the town. [Most small towns had only one Protestant and one Roman Catholic church.] But, the marriages were usually performed in a church of the denomination of the bride -- even if it was in another town. This also makes tracking them difficult. Late in the 19th century the spelling of Rigó was changed to Riga.



The 1800 map above -- of the eastern part of Veszprém megye (county) -- shows the mills along the Gaja patak (brook). That stream, like most in the area, no longer flows because the water was diverted to underground conduits to provide the huge amounts of water required for the aluminum smelter in Inota. Of the six mills the map shows in Csereány, four are documented as having been owned by family members.

Below left, is a 1990 photo of a Barát family mill in Csernye -- the building is unused, the mill wheel gone. This is the second mill from the right on the map. The photo at the right, shows an existing windmill in Tés. Tés is the highest village in the Bakony hills, and so has no streams. Of the many windmills that were there in the early 19th century, only two remain. Neither of the two windmills owned by our Rigó ancestors in Tés during 1850's still exist.



The last of the family-owned mills was confiscated by the new Communist government of Hungary in 1947. It was owned by my dad's first cousin, Jenő Nemes of Inota. It was a rolling mill making felt. The building (seen below left in 1999) was converted into apartments, but is now derelict. A grindstone from one of the family mills was salvaged by a family member, and is now stored in his Inota back garden (seen at right).



The Szondi Family was more educated and more religious than the other families in this ancestral line. The few Szondis that we have found were school teachers of the Reformed faith. The alternative spelling of the name -- **Szundi** -- is also found in the records. The Szondi family leads us to our **Tolnai** and **Seres** (also spelled **Sörös**) ancestors of Szekszárd. There they were middle-class citizens and leaders in the Reformed church (shown below). That city has a most interesting history. It was a thriving medieval city, and then a Turkish military headquarters and the seat of a Sanjak during the occupation period. But, at the end of the occupation there were only about a dozen Hungarian families left in the city. They were probably all of the Reformed faith, since that's the only Christian denomination the Turks tolerated. But, it seems impossible to ascertain whether our family lived in Szekszárd during that era.

