

## INTERVIEW

Behind that wrinkled face there is an amazing life. Stories you won't believe. My grandfather had a hard youth and he struggled all his life but he never stopped smiling.

- When were you born?

I was born in 1940, it was a year before the war.

- How many children were there in your family?

My father already had six children but their mother died, so he married again. His new wife gave birth to me and my younger sister. Because I was the seventh I always got torn clothes. We didn't have money for new ones of food. We lived in poverty.

- When did your father die?

He died when I was three years old. The children from his first marriage hated my mother. It was very hard for her. I was often overlooked. I got very ill. I almost died because I had tapeworm. Eleven years later my mother died, I was only 14. I took care of my own. I was often hungry and cold. Because there was no money I couldn't finish elementary school.

- What did you do before you started working at the mine?

I helped my brothers at the farm. I was the best in woodcutting. I could cut down any tree. People often asked me for a favour. Then I got a job at the mine. With my first salary I bought a red alarm clock so I could wake up at 3 am and went to work by foot. In the afternoon I got home from the mine and worked at home till dark. I often was worn out.

- How did you meet my grandmother?

A good friend drove me on a motorbike to a farm near Braslovče. He told me he had a bride for me. When I saw her my heart stopped. She was the most beautiful woman. I knew she was the one. I courted her for over a year. Then we got married in 1964. She had given birth to two beautiful girls. But sadly my wife died after eight years of marriage. That was the hardest moment in my life. I felt like my heart was torn apart. I still miss her. The next few years I struggled. But my daughters gave me hope and helped me move on. But I never got married again.

- What's your most vivid memory?

I remember when I was just a boy, there was an old cherry tree behind our house. Every spring the tree blossomed. I still remember the smell. I climbed on the tree as high I could and looked around. I could see all the hills around but I felt like I can see all the world. I felt invincible, like I'm the only one in this world. I forgot about the poverty and the hatred I lived in as a child.