

Stefan Guth And His Grandparents



In this photo you can see me as a child, I must have been one year old, with my maternal grandparents, Emanoil and Hannah Lobl. The photo was taken in Fagaras, where my grandparents lived; there was no special occasion, I think they just wanted to have a photo with their only grandson. My grandfather had a restaurant in Scoreiu, after which he could afford to move his business to Fagaras. His restaurant there was called Mercur and it soon became the most popular restaurant in the city. I never got to know the famous Mercur. When I visited my grandparents they had a smaller restaurant, in the center of Fagaras, near the bank. I don't remember its name, but everybody said, 'Let's go to Mano bacsi!', that's how he was known in town. The restaurant was in their house: two large rooms were sort of a pub, where people had a mug of good cold beer, for which my grandfather was famous, and there was another room where people could eat. In the back, there were two more rooms where my grandparents lived. My grandmother was a housewife, but she had a lot of things to do: she was in charge of the restaurant's kitchen; she was supervising everything. The cooks and the servants were cooking her recipes, and she herself cooked wonderfully. I still remember one of my favorites, borsostokany [in Hungarian]. It was pepper veal stew, I can still see it being served in deep plates, with a lot of dark peppered gravy and meat, it was awesome! Every Sunday morning the upper crust of society in Fagaras came to Mano bacsi for this famous stew, served with a mug of cold beer. This was the Sunday ritual in Fagaras, for Hungarians and Romanians alike, it was in the Sunday program as certain as the minyan is for Jews in the Saturday program! I stayed with my grandparents a lot, all my holidays when I was in elementary school were spent there. I had a lot of friends there, and it was also there that I learnt to swim and to fish in the Olt River. My grandmother was busy with the restaurant, but she always found time to pamper me, so I was rather spoiled as the only grandson. She followed my every whim, cooked my favorite dishes. But that didn't happen very often because I had the restaurant's menu to choose from. I remember I liked to play the waiter and serve the clients myself. Grandma and grandpa were so proud to see me going to the tables with the white napkin on my arm. People liked me, or at least I think they did, and they kept congratulating my grandparents for the wonderful grandson they had! I was 11 years old back then, because I know I was in elementary school. My grandmother was more religious than my grandfather, she observed all the traditions: she cooked kosher food for the family, and she would have liked the restaurant to be kosher as

well, but of course it wasn't possible. I didn't observe the kashrut, I was always tasting from every pot in the restaurant's kitchen. They both observed Sabbath, and went to the synagogue on Saturday, and my grandmother lit candles on Friday evenings. I went with them to the synagogue on Saturdays, and I remember there was a tennis court near the synagogue, where we kids would gather and play.