

Melitta Seiler



This is a photo of me when I was just a baby, probably no more than one year old. It was taken by uncle Max Sternschein, my mother's elder brother. Look how good care my mother, Sara Hudi Seiler was taking of me, I was so young and yet all dressed up in the typical Romanian embroidered blouse, and with cute shoes! I was born in 1929 in Cernauti, and I had an elder sister, Erika Esther Ellenburgen, born in 1931. I didn't have a Fraulein [governess] when I was little; my mother took care of me, with the help of the servants. I went to the state elementary school for the first four grades. I did the first grade of high school in the Holy Virgin high school, a nuns' high school. Each high school had a different uniform back then, and each pupil had a number. Half of our class was made up of Jews, and the other half of Romanians and Poles. We had religion classes, and we, Jewish girls, had a teacher of Jewish religion, and anti-Semitism was never an issue back then. All students paid a tax; and they all studied the same subjects in Romanian, except for religion, of course. I remember in high school I had thick, beautiful, chestnut-red hair, and I wore it in two plaits. During the breaks the boys were chasing me and pulling my plaits, saying, 'Melitta, du hast einen Wald im Kopf!', that is, 'Melitta, you have a forest in your head!' I was good at mathematics, but I especially liked literature and history; I read a lot about famous painters and

writers, I enjoyed it. I had friends in school, but not outside of it because my mother didn't let me wander in the town all alone. I don't remember names, it was a long time ago, but my friends were Jewish and Romanian alike.