

Sara Hudi Seiler



This is a photo of my mother, Sara Hudi Seiler, taken in Uncle Max Sternschein's photo studio. I think mother had just come back from Germany, where she had visited her sister Grete, and where she stayed for a year, so she must have been 16. It is during this time that she had her strabismus operated. I remember my mother used to tell me about this dress, she loved the golden collaret it had. She was born in Cernauti in 1905, and her mother tongue was German. She met my father, Iosif Seiler, through her elder sister Toni, and my father liked her very much. She, on the other hand, wasn't very determined to get married. But my mother's family made her head swim with what a good man he was, that he was an orphan but very hard working, and so on, so my mother eventually gave in and accepted to marry him. My maternal grandmother baked leika - it is some kind of brownish sponge cake with honey that Jews in Bukovina made for every wedding or high holiday. My grandfather took my mother and they went to Zablotov, where the engagement took place. My mother had some jewels with her, jewels she had from her sister Grete. She gave these

jewels to my father to sell, so that he would have money to pay for his passport. But she told him that there would be no marriage until he did his military service, which he had to do in 1926, I think. Of course my mother changed her mind several times in this period, but they eventually got married in Cernauti when he came back from the army. We had books in the house, some religious ones and many novels because that's what my mother used to read. I don't remember authors, but I know she read good books, classics mainly, all in German; she didn't read cheap novels. She went to the public library in Cernauti regularly, she was very fond of books. She was rather religious, she cooked kosher food, baked challah on Fridays; she observed Sabbath, she didn't light the fire on Sabbath, somebody else came to do it. Every spring, before Pesach, or fall, before the holidays, my mother had something elegant ordered at the tailor's for her and for us. She had good taste, and she was a very elegant woman, very up-to-date with the fashion. When she went for a walk, she always wore gloves and a hat. Back then, there was a dress in fashion for young women and children, which came from Vienna I think, a Tyrolean model: the dirndl; it had a pleated skirt and pleated sleeves. It was worn with a small apron. My mother used to make one for us every summer, and she had one as well. When we went out, nobody thought she was our mother, everybody thought she was the nanny or an elder sister. My mother died in 1990 in Brasov; she was buried in the Jewish cemetery and I managed to bring a chazzan to her funeral from Bucharest because there was none in our town.