

Magdalena Springer, Klara Stern And Ludovic Springer



This is a photo taken in Odorhei in my maternal grandparents' garden, in 1939, and you can see, starting from left: my mother, Magdalena Springer, nee Iszakovics, Ludovic Springer, one of my father's brothers, and my mother's sister, Klara Stern, nee Iszakovics. The photo was taken on one of the few occasions my mother came to Odorhei to visit after she married and moved to Bucharest. The distance between Bucharest and Odorhei was huge.[342 km.]

My uncle Ludovic was born in Brasov in 1907. He worked as a dentist in Los Angeles. He was married to Lizica Springer, a Romanian, and they had a daughter, now dead unfortunately, Ani Springer. Ludovic died in Los Angeles in 1975.

During World War II, in 1943 I think, my maternal grandparents and Aunt Klara, who lived with them in Odorhei, were deported to Auschwitz. [Editor's note: The deportations in Transylvania took place in April-May of 1944.] My grandmother was gassed in 1944, and only grandfather came back after the war. As there was no news back then about the camps, everybody thought Klara was dead too, and my mother was simply struck with grief and her nerves were shattered. Her doctor recommended that she should be taken somewhere to rest; so, my father sent us with mother to Intorsura Buzaului, to stay for a few weeks at a peasants' house. Meanwhile, my father returned to Bucharest.

One day, in July, somebody knocked at the door. When my father opened, it was a short young woman, around 22, all skin and bones, bold, with a kerchief over her head. She was wearing army boots size 44, although, as we later found out, her tiny feet were size 35, and a long black men's overcoat in that July heat, tied with a rope around the waist. My father asked her, 'Who are you looking for?' And only then the woman spoke: 'Carol!'. It was only by her voice that my father recognized his sister-in-law, Klara.

She was lucky to make it because she was young and strong and fit to work, so the Germans had sent her to an armament factory, somewhere nearby the concentration camp, where she had to assemble bombs. She came home when the camp was liberated. My father brought her to Brasov, to my paternal grandfather's, but first told her that her sister wasn't well, and asked her to eat, rest for a few days, and borrow a dress from her sister's wardrobe. Then he would take her to see her sister. Father phoned mother and told her that on Saturday he would come with guests, but he didn't want to say who it was, so that my mother wouldn't be more troubled than she already was. He said it would be a surprise. Then Saturday came, and we were at the train station, the train arrived and my father was taking off some suitcases, but there was no sign of the guest. My mother was curious, and eventually my father announced: 'The guest is your sister!'