

Leon Stiel With His Wife Karola And Daughter Edyta



This is a photo of my uncle Leon Stiel, his wife Karola Stiel, nee Bursztyner, and daughter Edyta in Argentina. It was taken in 1946 in Buenos Aires. The photograph, a very tiny one, they sent me in a small package. Debora Stiel was my grandmother on my mother's side. She had three daughters and two sons. My mother was the eldest - Ettel Bertram. One son Leon or Lazarz, Luzor in Hebrew, emigrated to Buenos Aires in 1927. In Cracow he met a girl by the name of Karola. Granddaddy didn't want to allow that marriage, because her family was poor. Her mother sold bagels and Granddaddy didn't like that. They wanted to have an intelligent family, or some money, or a dowry. There used to be this tradition among Jews that she had to have a dowry. When he emigrated, she went after him as an unmarried woman. Three weeks she was at sea, sailing on a ship. He set himself up there; he had friends in Argentina that helped him. He did well; he was a goldsmith by trade, and here in Cracow he had been out of work. And he married that Karola in Argentina. They had only one daughter, a pretty girl. I even have a photograph, a tiny one, which they sent me in a small package. My uncle was a very good goldsmith; he did this very precise work on rings, silver and gold trinkets. Then he opened his own watchmaker and jeweler's shop. As for me, my uncle promised to get me out [of Poland after the war]. Uncle Luzor kept in touch with the family in Poland and pressed them to get me to go out there. When I went to HIAS, and asked if there was any chance of going to Argentina, they said that they could pay for me as far as Gdansk or Gdynia. I could have paid that, too; it was the journey on from there that was the problem. Aunt Karola wrote to me saying that the journey cost 10,000 pesetas. I didn't know how much that was in dollars. I didn't go. Karola persuaded her sister to go, though, after the war. My uncle wrote to me saying that I should borrow the money for the journey from her. But I didn't want to ask her, that Mrs. Hudes. Another one of my uncles promised that we would go together, but I wasn't to tell anyone. He was going with his sister-in-law, because his wife had been killed. And he went. His ex-fiancee told me that if I would work with her then I could go with her. I worked for her for a few months. And she went and I stayed. Before that, my uncle ordered me to split from my friend, who

I'd been in the camps with, and in Georgia, and in Cracow. And that friend went too, and I was left alone, high and dry. So they all fleeced me. Then when I tried to arrange to leave through official channels, the authorities refused me.