

Sami Fiul With His Wife, Neti



This is a photo of me and my wife, Neti Fiul, taken in Bucharest, in 1950; it wasn't a special occasion, we were just out to relax, and we wanted to have a memory of that day. We were in a boat on the lake of Cismigiu park, in the center of Bucharest. I met my wife when I was in the army, in the regiment of the Railways; we met in Bucharest in 1949, when I had furlough, at a cousin of mine, where she was also invited. I remember I was wearing my uniform then. Neti was from Galati, born there in 1928. She came from a Jewish family as well, and she had two brothers, Izu and Misu Marcus. I don't know what her father worked when he was young, when I knew him he was already retired. We fell in love, but we had to have an engagement first, those were the times. But the engagement took place without me, because I was in Chitila, with the regiment, and the winter was so hard, that I couldn't get to Bucharest. So the engagement was made in my absence, they only had a photo of me, and said: 'This is the fiancée, but he cannot come'. The engagement was held in her home, in Galati, and it was a religious one, a rabbi came to do it. We got married 3 or 4 months after that. In order to marry my wife in 1949, I had to be released from the army. The wedding was in June, and it was a real Jewish wedding, like you don't see very often today. It took place in Galati, in my father-in-law's house. My parents and her parents met, they established how to help us start a new life. There was a big party in the garden, all my relatives from Bacau, Bucuresti, Moldavia came, and all her relatives from Galati. There were two schils in Galati, in the same courtyard, on Bernard Andrei street. One was the one of the handicraftsmen, and the other was a beautiful temple. We had our wedding in the schil of the handicraftsmen, which today is the canteen of the Jewish community in Galati. We were called out to Torah, then the ketubbah was written: we were at the table, my father was on one side, her father on the other, I felt like a prisoner, there was no way out! This is a joke, of course, I wanted desperately to be with that woman, who understood me so well? [he starts crying]. My wife only had a housekeeping school, which she did after primary school, girls didn't study much back then, religion or something like that, they just had to know how to read and write in Romanian. We had our child four years after we got married; back then, I was looking for work, I had to be the man in the house, provide, and my wife was a housewife. Rodica was born in 1953 in Bacau, I remember it was a harsh winter,

the snow was up to my knees. I was proud, there was another Fiul member in our family! Back then I was still working in Bacau. I raised my daughter to be a Jew, and her mother observed all traditions at home, she lit the candles on Friday evenings and said the blessing, and we had a traditional Friday and Saturday dinner. I had little or no time for properly observing the Sabbath, for example, I observed only the high holidays, but I enjoyed them. At home, I tried to lead the Seder Eve, but I don't think I measured up to the one my father used to lead. When I worked in Bacau, I spent Pesach with my parents, of course, and my father led the Seder Eve, like he did when I was a child, but after I moved to Braila, it wasn't the same: we had afikoman, and matzah bread, but a part from the charm of the holiday was gone for me. We also had a Christmas tree, more for Rodica, who loved this custom. Rodica didn't have bat mitzvah, I think that's something more modern, I saw it done only in Israel.