

Judit Grunberger, Sara Sporn And Vasile Grunea



This photo was taken in the Julietta Photo Salon in Brasso in 1936. My family must have been especially fond of coming here because we have several photos that were taken in this studio. My maternal grandmother, Sara Sporn (nee Paneth), who was living with us at the time, is standing between me and my sister Judit Grunberger (nee Gruber). If you look at the photo more closely, you can see that my grandmother isn't wearing her real hair but a wig. My sister Judit Gruber is wearing a sailor-suit. I am standing next to my grandmother wearing a checkered flannel shirt and a sleeveless pullover. My grandmother was very good at knitting and she was reading while she knitted. I have never seen anyone else in my life who knitted as fast as she, she knitted a small pullover like this for us in a few hours. I remember her mostly like this: reading and knitting at the same time. I must have been placed a little higher, as I seem to be a little taller than they, although I was actually smaller than they. My grandmother Sara lived with her daughters, sometimes with Magda, sometimes with Helen in Kolozsvár and sometimes with us in Brasso; she left for Israel in 1936. Lea was the first to leave, Piroška followed her with her daughter, and my grandmother left after them. I think that they emigrated because of economic reasons. My grandmother was very religious, but she didn't force her religiosity on anyone else. She came to us and noticed that we didn't have a separate salt-cellar for meat and dairy dishes. When you have a meat dish, you have to put one salt-cellar on the table and when you have dairy dishes you have to use another one. For example, if one had potato soup with milk, one had to put salt in it from the salt-cellar for dairy dishes. We didn't have a separate salt-cellar for this in Brasso. My mother told me later that my grandmother had noticed this but she didn't want to insult my mother, so she sent the servant to buy one and told her: 'Go tell the mistress that you broke the salt-cellar and have to go and buy a new one'. And she didn't say to my mother, 'How come, my daughter, that you don't have a salt-cellar for dairy dishes!?' My mother told me another story: my grandmother was sitting in the garden in Haifa - there was a nice flower garden in front of the house, I saw it later, too - and a missionary came into the yard. She welcomed him, offered him coffee or tea and said, 'I respect your religion, I ask you to respect mine, too; we can talk about anything you want,

but let's not talk about religion. Everybody should stay with the religion they were born with.' My sister is one year older than I, she was born in 1925, and I was born in 1926. Looking back now, I can see that she could always think more maturely than I, although there's only a very small age difference between us. She helped me a lot in my studies both in elementary and secondary school. When she was in first grade, I was still in kindergarten, and when I went to first grade, she was already in second grade. But when I went to first grade, I could read and write well already, because I learnt it from her and my mother also taught me a little. This both had advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage was that I was extremely undisciplined because I was bored. When the teacher started teaching the alphabet to the others and told them to draw a line, I was obviously bored. I tried to talk with my neighbor and I remember that the teacher put me in a separate bench alone for a while so that I wouldn't have anyone to talk to.