

Sigmund Engler



This picture was taken when our uncle from America, Sigmund Engler, my mother's step-brother, came to visit us. In the background you can see the apartment on Gheorghe Doja Street where we used to live in Targu Mures. The first from the right, wearing glasses, is my brother, Hary Margulies; Uncle Sigmund is the one next to him; the lady in the middle is Hary's wife, Elena Zavate; their son, Arthur, is in front of her. I'm the one to the left. The elderly lady next to me is my mother, Antonia Margulies. The photo was probably taken at the beginning of the 1970s.

Sigmund Engler, was 18 when he left for America, in 1918, after World War I. He knew many people there. At first, he worked for a car wash owned by a friend of his. Then he obtained a loan and, after his friend died, took over the business. He developed it and made a living out of it. His girlfriend, a Jewish woman who had stayed behind, eventually joined him in America and they got married. After a while, my uncle's wife, I don't know her name, had an affair with an American man. When her husband found out, he told her to move in with her lover. She refused. She locked herself in a hotel room and killed herself. Sigmund remarried. He picked a beautiful American girl. They came to his native country together in 1926 or so, when I was about five. They had two sons. One of them took over the business; I don't know anything about the other one. My uncle died a long time ago. His wife survived after him for quite a while, but she is dead now.

My brother finished high school, waited for a year and passed his graduation exam. Then he went to Bucharest, was admitted at the Polytechnic and became an electrical engineer. He graduated in 1954 or 1955. They wanted to send him to specialization courses in Russia, but he said, 'That's where I come from and never want to return to again!' Those courses could have helped him get important positions, but he didn't want to go. After he finished college, he was assigned to a power station in Doicești, in Oltenia. It was at the end of the world. Misu Kraft Davidovici, a former fellow-student said he wanted to work there, too; they made him the manager of the power plant in Craiova. During Khrushchev's visit to Romania in 1958, there was a power failure in Bucharest one evening. My brother was in charge and the Securitate wanted to arrest him. But my brother couldn't say what had gone wrong. Electricians went out into the field and discovered a stork that had built its nest on the power lines, which had caused a short circuit. My brother got away, but he made a decision, 'I'm not staying here anymore; I've had enough. I'm going to Israel.' Nevertheless, he stayed.

He met a girl who finished college in Bucharest, too. Her name was Elena Zavate; she wasn't Jewish. He married her. Meanwhile, Kraft got him out of Doicești and moved him to Craiova, to his power plant, where he appointed him deputy technical manager. He married Elena in Craiova. They received an apartment there. They had a son whom they named Arthur Margulies, after his grandfather. They lived in Craiova for a number of years.