

At The Gravestone Of Grandmother Sofia Braunstein



This is a photograph about my grandmother, Sofia Braunstein, who died in 1956.

This is my mother right here (the 5th person from the right), my sister who is now living in Israel is standing next to her (on the right), followed by my father.

My sister-in-law, which is to say the wife of my brother Silviu, is standing next to my father, and this is me (the first person from the right).

My brother Silviu is standing behind my mother. My mother's sister, Tily Iancu, is standing behind the tombstone.

Aunt Cela, a friend of my parents', is standing on the left of the tombstone. A primary cousin of mine, Jenica Iancu, who is living in Israel too, is standing between my mother's sister and aunt Cela.

The first one on the left of the photograph is aunt Cela's brother, and the woman between them is a Greek lady from the Negroponte family who was a friend, but who also passed away.

I was making an inventory yesterday evening, that from among all the people in this photograph, only 4 are still alive.

The setting of my grandmother's tombstone took place around the time when we, me and my husband, returned from Ardeal [Transylvania] to live in Braila.

I was still a student in 1956 when my grandmother died and it wasn't until we returned from Turda that my grandmother's tombstone was made.

Normally, the tombstone should be set a year after the death of the person. This photograph was taken around 1966-1967, because it took a while until they made her a tombstone.

Until 1948-1950 my parents' financial situation was very good, meaning that one person was working, namely my father, and he was able to support seven others.

Afterwards, my father had to give up the store, but I forgot the actual year when that happened. I was still a student then. My father started working in a state-run butcher's shop.

That is why I say that the financial situation worsened afterwards, because my sister started working after she graduated from high school.

She even received a qualification afterwards, for she attended a technical high school and supported me during my university studies. She didn't attend the university.

I was given a position in Cluj after graduating from the university, but I had married during the 5th year of my studies and my husband who was an actor obtained a transfer to the theatre in Turda; as a result, I myself went to Turda.

The ministry officials were very surprised at my request to be given a position in Turda instead of Cluj. Then we moved to Braila, because the reconstruction in Ardeal was non-existent.

I received a newspaper clipping from my parents with an announcement that they were building a Fiber Combine in Braila.

I applied for a transfer, stating that I would like to go to Braila; it was with great difficulty that I received the transfer from Turda, where I worked after finishing my studies.

When the artificial [synthetic] fibers combine was built in 1963, I moved from Turda and came to Braila, because they gave apartments to those who worked at the combine.

Otherwise, I might have never returned to Braila. I loved my father very much and this was another reason for my return. I moved there and my father died soon afterwards, in February 1964.

My mother died in February 1973. Silviu died in February 1989 as well. I mean to say that they all died in the month of February: both my mother, and my father, and my brother.

That's how it came to pass. My parents are buried in Braila, in the Jewish cemetery. I believe that there was still a rabbi in Braila when my father died. The grief was so great in those days that I'm not really sure of this.

The religious ceremony was as it is nowadays, meaning that our rituals are much shorter and less pompous, which is to say that the priest [the rabbi] puts on less of an act.

Actors and priests are alike in nature, in my opinion. I even had a photograph once taken on the occasion of the blessing of my father's tombstone.

We observe the Yahrzeit, meaning the 'Commemoration of the dead.'