

Basea Soifer, Sura Milstein And Edna Sinai



This is us, the two sisters, Sura Milstein and Edna Sinai, with grandmother Basea Soifer in the middle. The photograph was taken in Bucecea in the garden next to our grandparents' house. These were the raspberry bushes. The photograph was taken in the 1930's by an amateur, my uncle Nathan Soifer - he played the sportsman.

My mother's parents were Basea and Usher Soifer - my grandmother's maiden name was Rabinovici. The grandparents from my mother's side lived in Bucecea. [Bucecea is located in the county of Botosani, 22 km west of Botosani.] My grandmother was tougher than my grandfather. My grandfather was kinder, more forgiving. My grandfather was kind and pious. He was bearded and wore a kippah on his head - that's what Jews wore to cover their head. My grandmother wore her hair short and covered her head with a scarf. She also had a wig. It was custom-made, I believe it was from Poland. It was nice, made of dyed, brown hair, and it had a loop at the back. And on Saturdays, on holidays, she wore the wig - she would cover it with a scarf - and she would go to the synagogue. She went to the synagogue on Saturdays. Only men attended the synagogue on Friday evening, the women went to the synagogue during the day, on Saturday. She also wore the wig when she visited people. She had a few friends and they used to meet, especially on Saturdays. My grandmother wore ordinary dressing gowns, with buttons all the way down to her feet, and I wore them myself for I enjoyed playing, dancing in these dressing gowns. They were made of marquisette - that's what that fabric was called -, it was transparent, for summer wear - you also wore it as a dress. And I would titivate myself with her dressing gowns and put on performances for the neighbors. She had dresses and she also had dressing gowns - her financial situation was fairly good. But she wore dark, sober colors.

My grandfather dressed in the German fashion, he wore a coat and a shirt. He was very religious, both of my grandparents were. My grandfather always attended the synagogue - I believe he went there every evening, or maybe every morning. My grandmother read prayers in the morning, too. She used to wake up early in the morning and sit in the dining room and read prayers. She was very religious.

My grandmother was a housewife. They had a nice house, with three rooms and a kitchen. My grandfather's financial situation was better. They also raised livestock, but that was before I was born. They didn't raise fowl. I don't even know what animals they raised, it was either a horse or a cow. And it was there, in that shed, that my grandfather improvised a bathtub. He ordered a wooden bathtub, he bought a small cauldron, and we'd take baths there with walnut leaves and salt. We could stretch inside the bathtub. Only the family used this bathtub. They had a small flower garden. My aunt - my mother's sister -, was skilled in these things, both in gardening and everything else. When they painted the house she worked alongside the workers and helped them choose the colors. She was very talented, an all-round person. She could also sew, she had a sewing machine - she sewed for the household - a dressing gown and the like.

As for myself, my birth name was Sura Sulimzohn, I was born in 1922 in Bucecea, in the county of Botosani. I spent my holidays there when I was little, at my grandparents' house in Bucecea. And before going to school I spent more time in Bucecea than I did at home. My childhood in Bucecea was the brightest period of my life.