

## Sara Hudi Seiler With Her Family



This is a photo of my family: my mother Sara Hudi Seiler, my father Iosif Seiler are in the back, left in the first row that's me and my sister Erika Esther Ellenburgen is next to me. My father, Iosif Seiler, was born in Nepolokovtsy [Chernivtsi province, Ukraine], in a village near Cernauti, where his mother came to visit some of her relatives, in 1901. His mother tongue was German, and he studied in a school for chef d'hors d'oeuvre [school for preparing appetizers] in Vienna. He stayed there two or three years, and then he went back to Zablotov, but he no longer fit in that small town, so he came to work in Cernauti. He worked in a restaurant, but he didn't cook, he just knew a lot of recipes for fancy appetizers, salads, cold buffets with fish and so on, and supervised everything. And I don't know how, but he knew my mother's sister, Toni. And thus he was introduced to my mother, Sara Hudi Sternschein. She was born in Cernauti in 1905, and her mother tongue was also German. My father liked her very much, she was young, very elegant; she had been to Germany twice to her sister Grete's. The first time she went she was 16, and she stayed for

one year. Grete helped her with an eye surgery my mother needed: she had her strabismus corrected at a famous clinic in Dresden. My father was a very handsome man, with black curly hair and dark blue eyes, and dimples. But unfortunately he suffered from paradentosis and lost his teeth when he was still young. My father needed a passport to stay in Cernauti, and that cost a lot of money, so eventually he had to go back to Zablotov. But my mother's family made her head swim with what a good man he was, that he was an orphan but very hard working, and so on, so my mother eventually gave in and accepted to marry him. My maternal grandmother baked leika - it is some kind of brownish sponge cake with honey that Jews in Bukovina made for every wedding or high holiday. My grandfather took my mother and they went to Zablotov, where the engagement took place. My mother had some jewels with her, jewels she had from her sister Grete. She gave these jewels to my father to sell, so that he would have money to pay for his passport. But she told him that there would be no marriage until he did his military service, which he had to do in 1926, I think. Of course my mother changed her mind several times in this period, but they eventually got married in Cernauti when he came back from the army. They got married in the synagogue, and then there was an elegant party; my father was dressed up in a tuxedo, and my mother had a very elegant silk dress and a veil, and a wonderful wedding bouquet made up of white roses and white lilac. However, my father never had Romanian citizenship, but he was allowed to stay in Cernauti because my mother was a Romanian citizen. He had to pay a tax every year for his passport, and he did so until World War II broke out. I was born in Cernauti in 1929, and my sister, Erika, in 1931. When I was born, my father hoped it would be a boy, but I came instead. And when Erika was born, he was sure it would be a boy that time, he even prepared his tuxedo! But again it was a girl. For all that, he loved us very much, and we loved him, he was a very good man.