

Bernard Fiul



This is a photo of my father, Bernard Fiul, taken in Bacau in 1925. I don't know if it was a special occasion, but I don't think so. My father, Bernard Fiul, was born in Fundu Moldovei in 1899. My father only had four grades of elementary school; he studied in German, under the Austro-Hungarians, in Fundu Moldovei or Campulung Modovenesc, because I am not sure that there was a school in Fundu Moldovei. When he was only 17, the World War I started, and he couldn't go on with his studies. Father did his military service under the Austro-Hungarians, and it was a bit of a problem to get Romanian military papers when he returned to Bukovina; but it was fixed. I don't

know if he fought during World War I, but I know he went as far as Czechoslovakia and Poland, and that he fell ill with typhoid fever and had to stay in the hospital. Father worked as a forester in Tazlau, and then he became a factory laborer, he even tried to be a small trader. He worked as a forester in the 1920s, when he was still single, and he was very good at it, he loved nature. My sister Lola and I, and our children, we all inherited I think his love for the mountains, for nature, for excursions. My father's work probably brought him to Bacau. His native tongue was Yiddish or German, but not Romanian. He learnt to write in Romanian later, he always wrote all the Romanian nouns with capital letters, just like in German. He had a beautiful handwriting, but not all correct because of this. He learnt Romanian and spoke it well when he was older, he even forgot most of his German, but mother, Dorina Fiul, used to tell us a funny story about father's Romanian, which wasn't so good when they were engaged: they were taking a walk in Bacau, and they stopped in front of a window of a pork-butcher's shop, and father exclaimed: 'Look at all this crap!' [Pun upon words in Romanian, caused by the confusion between the word 'porcarii', which means 'crap', which as the same stem as 'porc', which means 'pork', or 'pork products']. I don't know how my parents met exactly, but when they did, probably at some Purim ball, or other society event organized by the Jewish community in Bacau. It wasn't an arranged marriage; they just liked each other and fell in love. My father married my mother in 1924, in December, I think; mother used to tell me that it was very warm outside for December, and that she had just a bride's dress on, she didn't need a coat. I don't know if they got married in the synagogue. When father got married and moved to Bacau, in 1924, he tried to find something more stable, so he got a job as a laborer in the corn industry; then he tried to set up a small shop of his own, but it didn't work out, so he went on being a laborer. He worked at a mill in afternoon and night shifts, and at a textile factory, owned by a Jew, Izvoreanu. My father's main characteristic was that he was extremely hardworking. I remember him working hard, from morning until late at night. He eventually opened a retail grain shop, which was the territory of richer Jews; his business was really small. And when my mother inherited the inn her adoptive parents had, they started taking care of that business.