

Ruth Greif



This is me on the porch of our house in Sibiu, when I was five years old. The photo was taken in 1937. I was wearing that dress that was very much in fashion for kids at the time, a so-called dirndl, a Tyrolean model. I was born in Vienna in 1932 and I stayed there until I was three years old. My father was an associate with a friend of his in the bicycle business - I don't remember his name - and they stayed there for a few years. But they eventually went bankrupt, and thank God, my parents returned to Romania because the war started a few years after they had left Vienna and Austria was occupied by Germany. I don't remember anything from those years in Vienna, I was too little. After that, my parents came directly to Sibiu, where they had a tobacco shop. The

shop wasn't in the same house where we lived, it was in the center of Sibiu, in a rented house: it had one room and a little storage room in the back. My parents served the customers; they had no employees. They sold cigarettes, stamps, cigars, pipes, and tobacco in small carton boxes. My father didn't smoke, but my mother, especially after we moved to Brasov, used to smoke a cigarette every now and then. The shop was only two blocks away from the house in which we lived; it was on Bruckental Street, in the very center of town. It was also rented, and we occupied the second floor of the house. We had two rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom, running water and electricity. I remember we had a Persian carpet in the living room, but the rest of the house had ready-made furniture, nothing special. We also had a courtyard, but my mother didn't work in the garden, we shared it with the other neighbors. When I was little, my mother always put me to bed at 8 o'clock in the evening, and woke me up at 8 in the morning. So I used to think that the day stops at 8 in the evening, the clock as well, and it starts again the next day at 8 in the morning! I also remember I had a Jewish friend, Rose-Marie Springer, who lived across the street from us; we grew up together. She was two years older than me, I believe. Her mother was a doctor and her father was a jeweler. We used to play together, in our courtyard or in hers; we enjoyed going for walks in the central park, which had lovely alleys.