

The BREUER Family

by
Paul LINHARDT

Geographic Origin

The BREUER family is from Újfehértó, a small village in Szabolc county in Hungary. Population: 14,694. 19 miles north of Debrecen. 123 miles East of Budapest. (long. 47E 48', lat. 21W 41'). My mother's uncle Sandor BREUER once told her that the BREUERs of Újfehértó went back 300 years. However, this is probably an exaggeration as the book Újfehértó Zsidosaga only lists only 2 Jewish families living in Újfehértó in 1746. This number jumped up to 102 Jewish families in 1785 and 511 families in 1818[1] no doubt corresponding to migration of Jews from the Pale settlement of Poland/Russia as a result of the pogroms. I once found some notes scribbled from my grandmother in a book in my uncle's library which said the BREUERs were originally from Sopron in Western Hungary. While unconfirmed, it is certainly possible as there was a high concentration of BREUERs in that region.[2] There is a photo of one of the 2 mills of Újfehértó at the web site and is probably the one that was owned by Ferenc BREUER and his brother-in-law Ignatz KATZ.

Origin of Name

BREUER is the German word for brewer (of beer). Prior to 1787, Jews in the Austrian Empire did not have family names, but in 1787 they were required to adopt (and often randomly assigned) German surnames. Thus, there are many unrelated Jewish and gentile families named BREUER in Germanic speaking countries. Nonetheless, BREUER is a relatively uncommon Jewish name in Hungary. Jews were often involved in inn-keeping and distillery as one of the few professions allowed them in the Austrian Empire. One famous Jewish BREUER was Dr. Jozsef BREUER of Vienna, Sigmund FREUD's mentor (probably unrelated).

Religion

The BREUER Family was Jewish but not overly strict. (Other than Fani BREUER GRUNBERGER the BREUERs do not appear to be buried in the Orthodox cemetery.) As Aunt Kato says: <The family was not religious. Just ordinary people. We kept a kosher home because of my [GRUNBAUM] mother. My father who came back from the United states didn't care too much about religious things.

Oldest Ancestor

Currently, the BREUER Tree traces back to my great, great grandfather Karoly "Aharon" BREUER, who was born some time prior to 1844 and married Katalin "Gisele" KANDEL (b. 1837; d. abt. 1881). Katalin may have been from nearby Bokony as records show many KANDEL in Bokony and/or buried in adjacent Gezstered (whose

The BREUER Family

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Jewish cemetery is now in ruins). The Újfehértó Records show a Fani BREUER (1811-1869) who died about 5 years before Karoly's daughter Fani was born (a clue that she may have been Karoly's mother). Fani was married to Bernat BREUER.

Children of Karoly BREUER

(1) Adolf BREUER (1860) owned kitchen utensil store in Tiszapolgar.

(2) Ignatz BREUER (1864) married Emilia (Mili) STARK who survived him and later became a shareholder in a winemaking business. Ignatz was the grandfather of Imre BREUER BANYAI (1922-1999) with descendants living in Budapest.

(3) Natzi BREUER (1865) (may be same as Ignatz).

(4) Reli BREUER (1867) married Jakab EHRNFELD. Son Aron died on the Russian front a hero.

(5) Jozsef BREUER (1868) married Lina BOHM. He was a hardware merchant who was an apprentice in Nyiregyhaza for 14 years. He opened his own store in 1899 in Polgar. He was also treasurer and director of Jewish Community.

(6) Ferenc BREUER (1870), my grandfather, was the first BREUER to immigrate to New York on the Braunschweig steamship on 27 Feb 1893 to avoid conscription into the Austrian army. Many Jews evaded the draft partly because they could not observe their religion in the army which did not serve kosher food. Ferenc returned to Újfehértó some time before 1901 to marry Amalia GRUNBAUM. Ferenc proudly hung a framed American citizenship paper above his desk. Ferenc had airs of having had been a gentleman in the US, but more likely he was a gentleman's gentleman (butler). Aunt Kato said once that her father got very angry when she discovered an old picture of him in the US in a waiter's apron. It was said part of Amalia's dowry was Újfehértó's flour mill which Ferenc owned and operated with his brother-in-law and next door neighbor Ignatz Katz. The mill burned down around 1915 (they say while Amalia was giving birth to her last child). Afterwards, Ferenc eeked out a living renting flour sacks to peasants, selling gasoline (to a town with one car) and by other odd endeavors. Ferenc was a stern man who was often fighting his children and in-laws, but he was kind and nurturing grandfather to my mother. Ferenc was sometimes known as Uncle Herman (Hebrew name Hershel). Ferenc and Amalia died in Auschwitz in 1944.

(7) Izador BREUER (1872) lived in Tolaj and had 3 children Bela, Ilona and

The BREUER Family

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Rozsi. All 3 probably died in the camps. Rozsi's husband Jozsef survived, but their child died in the camps.

(8) Fani BREUER (1875) married Jakab GRUNBERGER and had about 7 children. They had a son named Sandor who changed his surname to GABOR in 1946. His sons live in Budapest and have an auto rental business. Sandor's wife wrote a moving account of her Holocaust experience: A Bitter Journey.

(9) Samuel BREUER (1875) had two daughters: Kati & Eva and descendants still living in Debrecen.

(10) Bernat BREUER (1878) married Eszter REICHARDT and had children Erno, Andor and Katalin. Erno changed his name to BARBARAS with surviving descendants in Debrecen. Katalin immigrated to US w/ surviving descendants.

(11) Regina BREUER (1880) married Ignatz KATZ (1871) and had 5 children. Ignatz was a grain merchant since 1925. His father was a farmer. Ignatz had his own business since 1903, formerly dealt in sacks and had a mill. Ignatz KATZ was the business partner of my great grandfather Ferenc BREUER and owned the mill with him. Regina and Ignatz had a son Erno and another Endre (Bandi). Erno's wife and children were killed at Auschwitz. He remarried and moved to Canada (Montreal?) where one daughter, Marisa/Maria, survives. Erno was a "rablovezer".

Children of Ferenc BREUER

(A) Julianna BREUER (1902): As young women, Jutka-neni and her sister Kato sewed lingerie in Debrecen. In the mid 1930's, Jutka moved to Milan, Italy (where her brother Erno lived) to find a husband. Even though they were attractive and intelligent, it was difficult for the BREUER girls to find husbands as Jews with no dowries. When the Italian Fascists began deporting Jews around 1938-39, Jutka moved to Barcelona and sent for her sister Erzebet. Jutka married John Hutter (a good man but not as educated as she was, but more importantly a gentile). In '44, Jukta and Erzebet moved to Toronto because of more difficulties with the Franco's Fascists. She later moved to Los Angeles for the climate. After John Hutter died, she remarried briefly Istvan KALLA.

(B) Miklos BREUER (1904): My grandfather Miklos met my grandmother Cecilia FISCHMANN when she was visiting her step-mother's parents, the KUPFERSTEINs, in Újfehértó. Miklos fell promptly in love with the beautiful Cila and serenaded her with gypsies to the tune of "Csak egy kislány van a világon..." (There is one girl only in this world). Miklos had to wait 5 years until Cila's older sister Sari married before he married Cila and moved to Budapest. One of his father's card playing buddies got Miklos a job as a clerk in a textile company, but he lost his job when the first anti-Semitic laws forbid companies from employing too many Jews. Miklos and

The BREUER Family

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Cila then went into business for themselves in the lingerie business with Miklos being the main salesman and met with some success. They had two children, Agnes (1931) and George, before poor Miklos was called up to the forced labor camps. He survived a couple years in a work camp in Loello, Ukraine before he disappeared, presumed dead, in 1943.

(C) Laszlo BREUER (1906): Laszlo was Újfehértó's town communist and advised peasants on legal matters. He lived at home with his parents and was often feuding with his father. He was taken to the same labor camp as Miklos in Loello, Ukraine and disappear in 1943 on the same day. No photo survived.

(D) Erno BREUER (1907): Uncle Erno married Rosza Steiner and had a daughter named Elvira. Erno and Rosza went to Milan around 1935 where he ran a business managing dancing girls leaving Elvira in Újfehértó with her grandparents. When the fascists kicked the Jews out of Italy in '38-'39, Erno and his wife returned to Hungary and died in the Holocaust.

(E) Katalin BREUER: Kato-neni was the last of Ferenc & Mali's children to pass away in February 2002. Around 1929 she moved from Újfehértó to Budapest. For several years, she lived with Miklos & Cila and was sort of second mother to little Agi. She survived the Holocaust in a Spanish safe house. Her first husband Dezso SZANDEL died in 1945 after her daughter Anna was born. Kato and Anna moved to Toronto in 1948. She married Bela ROSZA in 1952 and lived together in around 1980 when he died.

(F) Sandor BREUER (1910): Uncle Sanyi had the only car in Újfehértó and offered his services as a chauffeur. He married Piroska ADLER. Both were survivors of the concentration camps. He changed his name to BANYAI (as did his cousin Imre BREUER) in 1949. Sanyi and Piri had a son Ferenc BREUER BANYAI who moved to Toronto and now lives in Los Angeles. Sanyi died in Nyiregyhaza in 1995.

(G) Erzsebet BREUER (1915): The youngest of the BREUER girls, Boszi moved to Barcelona to marry Joseph KLEIN. Her eldest sister Jutka had already moved to Barcelona and had written to her parents that she had found a nice boy who wanted to marry. This was prior to WWII and she was able to escape the worst of the anti-Semitism. Before of the end of the war, She and Jutka and their families moved to Toronto. Boszi & Joseph had a boy in Barcelona and later a girl in Toronto. They had numerous grandchildren in Toronto before Boszi died in 1981. After the war, Boszi & Kato Jutka put an ad in the Budapest paper, found Kato and got her and her daughter to immigrate to Canada too.

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Sources

The primary source of documentation on the BREUER family is extensive and outstanding research done by my mother's cousin Frank BANYAI. The most important vital records he accessed were the Újfehértó Jewish birth/marriage/death temple registry 1852-1895 (LDS FHC Film). The Niregyhaza Archives contains post 1895 Újfeherto Civil Registration. Also of great family historical value are the memoirs and photo album of my mother Agi Linhardt and interviews with her Aunt Kato Rosza.

[1] Újfehértó Zsidóság by Buczko Jozsef, published in 1998 by the City of Újfehértó. (Jewish family chart on page 24).[2] 1891 Instrustry and Trade Directory