

## Matilda Albuhaire's Paternal Grandfather, Yacov Mercado Albuhaire, With His Son Avram Albuhaire



This is my paternal grandfather Yacov Mercado Albuhaire and my uncle Avram Albuhaire. The photo was taken in Bourgas in 1911. My uncle was at the Officers of the Reserve School in 1911. Probably he had come home on leave and took a photo of himself with his father. He was a very disciplined person, with excellent professional training, having just graduated from the Law Faculty of the Sofia University and having worked already. As such he went to do his national service at the Officers of the Reserve School. Later on he was promoted to lieutenant and participated in WWI. He was wounded during the war and worked among the soldiers. My grandpa had come from Istanbul, where he was born. He was born in 1853 and came to Bulgaria in 1882 with his two-year-old son,

my father, without his wife. He lived in Bourgas with his son and remarried a woman called Mazal, who was born in Dobrich. My grandpa was a peddler in Bulgaria. I remember having been told that he used to carry the merchandise wrapped up on his back and this is how he went about. But after some time he made money and became a rich merchant in Bourgas. They had a shop on the main street. My grandpa spoke Ladino. We spoke Ladino at home until my younger brother was born in 1924. My grandpa was of medium height, rather stout, with an expression of kindness on his face. He was a very kind man and all of my girlfriends loved him. He always had candies in his pocket and whenever he saw my girlfriends, or the kids on the street and in the synagogue, he would inevitably give them some. He was very respected in the synagogue in Bourgas. He was a religious man, used to get up early in the morning and used to put on tefillin. I remember him always facing east, where Jerusalem, the temple, was. As I said, he was very respected - there was always a special chair for him in front of the tevah in the synagogue. Two persons used to sit in front of the tevah - my grandpa and a blind man from Bourgas, because they knew he was sincere and a believer-Jew, who abided by all traditions of Judaism. My grandpa lived only with his firstborn son, my father, since one of his sons disappeared, leaving no trace, and the other one married in France. He lived until 1932, more than 80 years and I have his genes, otherwise everybody else in our family passed away very young.