

Matilda Kalef With Relatives And Friends



My grandmother Matilda Kalef is pictured on the right. Next to her is Elica Koen and next to her is Elica's mother, Lenka Koen. I don't know where or when this picture was taken. Matilda woke up every morning at five. After she got up, she made herself coffee in the kitchen. I remember how she savored that coffee. Everyone else was sleeping. She was a big woman. She had lovely, long, thick hair. In my whole life I never saw such hair again. She then brushed her hair. She didn't cover her hair. She always wore it in a bun at the back of her head. After brushing her hair she went to the farmers' market. The big market was on Gospodar Jovanova Street near Kralja Petra and Visnjiceva Streets. The farmers' market was open every day. Grandmother went to the market every day. When she was done shopping she hired an Albanian to carry all the things back home. He carried the groceries in a big basket, which he wore on his shoulders. Then she put it all away. She instructed the girl who worked for us what needed to be prepared for lunch and went to the store. She came home at noon for lunch. She ate lunch with the rest of us, had a little rest and then got ready to re-open the store. Grandmother always opened the store at four and was there until seven. On her way home she went by Pelivan, a pastry shop on Kralja Petra Street, right near the Jewish community building, close to Gospodar Jovanova Street, on the left side where the Jewish community is. There she always bought us some sweets. She never came home without something for her granddaughters. She ate her dinner. Then her friends from the neighborhood came to play cards. They stayed until ten. It was a mixed group of men and women. Then she got things ready for the next day's lunch until midnight or one in the morning. Her work day was about 20 hours long. Maybe she slept for four hours. She was a phenomenal woman.