

## David Elazarov On An Excursion To Vladaya



This is a photo from Vladaya, near Sofia. I am the first on the left. My father, Solomon Elazar, is in the middle, the one in the dark suit and with a cane. I don't know the others. The photo was taken in the 1920s. The following is written on the back of the photo with a red pencil: 'N 109 14 cm. oval. mit Galom.' Later this photo was used as the basis for a portrait of my father which was placed on his gravestone. You can see on the photo how someone has marked with a red pencil who of the people my father is. When I was a student, my family and I often went to a place outside Sofia, Korubaglar - it was some 10-12 kilometers from town. It was an uninhabited area eastwards towards the Iskar River Gorge. During the holidays we got on carts and went there. We had a dog named Sharo and took it with us. We also took blankets and food and stayed there in the fresh air. There were a lot of chimneys in Sofia at that time and the air was really polluted. There was no central heating and every chimney was spewing smoke either from the wood or from the coal. We also went to Vladaya, but I didn't go to Vitosha Mountain [the mountain of Sofia] as a child. It became my favorite place for walks much later. I remember that sometimes the whole family went to a restaurant, Batenberg, to eat kebapcheta [Bulgarian national dish of grilled meatballs]. This was a luxury at that time - warm kebapcheta with French fries - and I loved it. We usually went on Saturdays or Sundays, while my father was still alive, that is, until 1932.