

Rebeka Pinkas And Rashel Levi (nee Pinkas)



In this picture you can see my aunt Rebeka Pinkas (on the left) - the wife of my uncle Yosif and my mother Rashel Pinkas. The picture was taken in a photo studio in Vidin in 1918. On the back of the picture there is a stamp of the photo studio: 'P. Brusnarev Vidin' [port city on the right bank of the Danube in Bulgaria, 220 km. away from Sofia].

My mother, Rashel, was from a wheat-trader's family - her grandfather and her father Sason were intermediary wheat-traders. After finishing a Jewish school and junior high school she was the last one to get married. She knew Ladino and Ivrit, which she had probably studied at the Jewish school.

She was the youngest child in the family. Her brothers and sisters - Sara, Sultana, Haim and Yosif were already married and everybody had settled down in a different house. My mother was very devoted to the house and when my father joined the family he paid off the shares to the other inheritors from her family.

My mother had prepared her trousseau. As a matter of principle a Jewish girl's trousseau must include some underwear for the bride, household linen, pillows, blankets, bedspreads, pyjamas and a shirt for the groom. Everything was supposed to be washed and starched. Ironing the trousseau is called Utilitar Elashugar and is an entire ritual. Women from both of the families gather together and start ironing the stuff. The ironing is actually an occasion to take a look at the trousseau and it was accompanied by giving treats to the ladies. After that the washed and ironed stuff was spread in a special room so it could be seen in its entirety. The trousseau (Ashugar) sometimes includes silver tableware. I've never seen jewelry. Jewelry is given by the mother or the mother-in-law during the wedding ceremony. My mother's Ashugar is still at home. Take a look at it. Look at the outline embroidered on the pillow-case. When I look at it I always remember my mother. And this sleeping pillow has a monogram - Rashel Pinkas. I cherish these highly. No one sleeps on them. I've left a lot of things for my son so he would know who his grandmother was. She was an extremely neat lady - big, massive and beautiful.