

# The Engagement Of Rashel Pinkas And Yosif Levi



This is a picture from the engagement of my mother Rashel Levi (nee Pinkas) and my father Yosif Levi in 1926 in Vidin. The picture was taken in a studio. Its back is designed as a postcard. There is an inscription in ink: 'Sofia, 10th June 1926 As a souvenir from our engagement which took place on 21st March 1926. Bakalov Mr. and Mrs. Yosif S. Pinkas' The picture was sent to my uncle. There is no stamp of the photo studio. My father didn't have his own home in Sofia. He married my mother by matchmaking. One of my aunts (Sultana - my mother's sister) used to live in Sofia. She introduced my mother to my father and they married in 1926 .

When my father joined the family he paid off the shares to the other inheritors from my mother's family. My father started living in my mother's house with his mother - my grandmother Vintoura. I used to joke with my father that he brought his mother - granny Vintoura, in the house as a dowry. The last occupation he used to have in Sofia was as a merchant of medical goods. Vidin is a town significantly smaller than Sofia and people already had taken up all the available positions. So he immediately started working in my mother's store. She used to sell manufacture - sewing cotton, necklaces, combs and other small goods. This store was located in the middle of the market, on the same line with the municipal shops. No one could buy anything there unless knowing Romanian. This market was located by the Danube and a lot of Romanians used to go shopping there as well.

I remember my father was a serious person. He never talked too much and he stammered on top of that. He had started stammering at school after being beaten by a teacher. I remember him reading a book sitting on his chair in our big living-room. He used to read books by Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. He always said 'That's not for you.' Then he would read us Mayne Reid or Jules Verne. He used to take books from all kinds of places. During the Holocaust finding something to read was an achievement. But he managed to do that by using the little doors that connected the houses. Although he didn't talk too much he was good at communicating to people without a needless waste and overuse of words. I remember that at the market place he only communicated to two or

three other merchants.