Yafa Beni On Klementina Str. In Sofia

On the photo first from left to right is my grandmother Yafa Beni – mother of my mother Matilda with relatives.

The photo was taken on Klementina Str. in 1945 – 1946.

I remember my maternal grandmother Yafa Sabat Beni (1880-1953) because I often visited her.

She lived on 35 Sredna Gora Str. in a house built by my grandfather Mois Sabat Beni (1878 - 1908), which was later extended by my uncles when they got rich.

I remember that it was a solid three-story house - every brother had his story. My grandmother was not very tall, and a bit overweight, but very energetic.

I remember her with gray hair done in a bun. She was always dressed in black because she was left a widow at 28 years of age.

She kept the mourning clothes until her death. She loved reading. She would read fairy tales in French and translate them to me.

My grandmother was a housewife all her life and looked after her children but she was a very educated woman for her times.

I do not know the origin or the material well-being of her parents, but most probably they were well-off, educated and progressive [i.e. intelligent] people, because they sent my grandmother to study at a French school, which was quite a progressive decision at the time.

But when she got 13-14 years old, they decided to marry her.

My grandmother told me that while she was playing ball on the street one day, her parents called her in to introduce her to her parents-in-law and her future husband - Mois Sabat Beni (1878 - 1908), who was a little bit older than her, probably 2 years. So, he was around 15-16 years old.

She left school. She was in the sixth or seventh grade.

They did not have children the first years of their marriage, because they themselves were still children.

Then she started giving birth to one child every year - five in all.

At 28 years of age she remained a widow, because my grandfather died of hernia in hospital.