

Samuel Coyas With His Finacee Bulisa Baruh And Her Family



This photo was taken on the day I got engaged to Bulisa Baruh in Tekirdag, the city she was born and grew up in. On the left, you can see my fiancée's uncle, Aron Ojalvo, beside him is his wife, Rasel Ojalvo, beside her is my fiancée Bulisa Baruh and I am standing beside her on the right. The head you can see in the back belongs to my mother Mazalto Coyas. The Baruh family lived in the Jewish neighborhood in Tekirdag. Bulisa is wearing a dress she had made herself. Aron Ojalvo and his wife lived in Kuledibi in Istanbul. They had a grocery shop in the same neighborhood. They never had any children. Aron died in the 80s of cancer. His wife married again after a while. She lives in Kurtulus as Rasel Ozsarfatı (her surname after she got married again). I got engaged to Bulisa Baruh, who was born in Tekirdag [a city in the Thrace region, where the Jews lived intensely] in 1932, through "proposition" [arranged marriage]. My cousin, Jak Deleon introduced us. Jak's wife Viktorya, and Bulisa's uncle Aron Ojalvo were siblings. Bulisa, would sometimes come to Istanbul to visit her uncle. When we liked each other, my father's sister's husband, Josef Deleon and Bulisa's father, Hayim Baruh got together, and came to an understanding. I received 3000 Liras as dowry. A few months later, my mother, my brother, my aunt Rashel and her husband Jozef, their son Cako and his wife Viktorya, my cousin Estreya (uncle Nisim's daughter), all went to Tekirdag by bus, for the engagement. During those times, we could either go to Tekirdag by bus in four hours or by ship in 6 hours. The Baruh family lived, in the Jewish neighborhood. There, we were welcomed in a very nice way. The house was filled with all the friends and relatives, who came to congratulate us. Long tables were set, we ate and drank, and stayed over at their house for two days. Some of them went to my mother-in-law's sister to stay over night, as there were no places left for them to sleep. My uncle Jozef Deleon (Rashel's husband) put on our engagement rings. I had brought a red heart-shaped box of chocolates, as a present. We stayed engaged for one year. Bulisa was educated up to the primary level. During that period, Tekirdag was not a developed city. Girls were not sent to middle high school, but were given to dress-makers as apprentices to learn the job. My fiancée

spoke Turkish and Spanish [Ladino], and like all the other girls who grew up in the provinces, knew sewing and needle work. During our engagement period, she often came to Istanbul and stayed over at us. Meanwhile, we had moved to a larger house, with my brother and mother, again in Kuzguncuk. Later on, we started calling her Berta, in the name of being modern. We would always speak Spanish [Ladino] amongst ourselves.