

Wedding Picture Of Merkado Mois Natan And Rebeka Avram Natan (nee Geron) Together With Friends



This is a wedding picture of my parents Merkado Mois Natan and Rebeka Avram Natan (nee Geron) together with friends. The photo was taken in Varna in 1923.

My father and my mother had an arranged meeting where they liked each other. They had a marriage (religious and civic one) in 1923 in Varna. They dressed very fashionably - my father was a dandy. He had 12 suits in the wardrobe.

My father worked as a procurator in a Turkish tobacco company - he was in charge of the finances. The owners respected him and his salary was 12,000 Bulgarian leva - very good for that time. However, the Turkish company went bankrupt and he returned in Ruse where he became the accountant of my uncle's company.

When my family moved back to Ruse, they were not so well-off, but we still had a normal standard of living. My father was the accountant at my uncle's company - they used to buy tobacco and process it. They were partners in Ruse. We lived in a rented house and my mother ran the household work.

I don't remember where we lived in Varna, but the house in Ruse was a decent small one and we lived on the ground floor. After that we moved from there to a bigger house with two rooms and a kitchen; this house shared the same yard with the old one. Then we moved to live in the center of the Jewish neighborhood where we had two rooms, a living room and a kitchen. We had a toilet inside the house and a bathroom, too - it was heated on firewood from outside as a Turkish bath.

We had electricity, but we used firewood and coal for heating. We were four of us - my mother, my father, my brother and I. After that we lived in other similar houses. The reason for moving so much was that we were seeking for better living conditions for the growing family. Besides, one of the houses was in the Bulgarian neighborhood, while later we managed to find a better one in the Jewish quarter, where we moved to. We used to change houses every five years or so.

In Ruse there were two synagogues: the Ashkenazi one and the Sephardi one. There was a chazzan, too. Haribi [rabbi] Naftali was the chazzan at the first one and haribi Tuvi was servicing the second one. There was a shochet, too - there was a chazzan and a mezamer. The chazzan was the chief one and mezamer was the one, who accompanied him, his assistant to the service. Bar mitzvah was made in both the synagogue and home. Mine was at home. A chazzan came with plenty of relatives and friends. He read and gave me the maturity certificate. This was the routine in Ruse, [which was possible because Bulgarian Jews were not extremely religious and certain rituals had been adapted to the situation in Bulgaria] and I can't say anything more. Marriages were performed in the synagogue only according to the traditional ritual - the prayer was read and the respective certificate was issued [Ketubbah].