

Ida Alkalai With Her Mother Matilda Shekerdjiiska



This is the balcony of our house in Dupnitsa. The photo was taken in the 1940s. It's a photo of me and my mother Matilda Shekerdjiiska. Nobody lives in that house now. My brother Josko Shekerdjiiski left for Israel.

Our house had two floors and a big balcony. It was in the center of Dupnitsa, very close to the building of the Jewish municipality. It was built by Grandfather Haim. Each family had their own

entrance. The house was old but the living conditions were good. There were two buildings in the yard. My family's apartment was in one of the buildings and consisted of two rooms and a kitchen. We had water and electricity. We didn't have a radio. One of the buildings faced the street and there were small shops on the ground floor. We lived in that building, but in the rooms facing the yard. The other building was further out in the yard. My father's brothers, who lived in Dupnitsa, had separate shops with warehouses. All the shops were on the main street of the town.

My mother was born in Kyustendil. I suppose that my father saw her when he went to Kyustendil and that's how they met. She worked as a seamstress. She had her own sewing machine. When I graduated from the vocational school, I started helping her with the sewing. She didn't observe Sabbath because she had to work on Saturdays. I have seen her sew on Saturdays.

My parents were humble people. They respected each other and loved us, the children, very much. My brother was also very modest. We never gave them much trouble. They weren't very strict, but raised us warmly and lovingly.

My parents communicated mostly with Jews. Their environment was Jewish. They spoke more of Ladino than Bulgarian. In the past I heard people saying that Jews spoke Bulgarian with an accent. The interesting thing was that there were Bulgarians in the Jewish neighborhood who spoke Ladino. Their environment was Jewish, they communicated with Jews mostly and that's how they learned Ladino. Some Bulgarians knew Ladino very well, because they had learned it when they were kids, during their games with the Jewish children. When I was a child, I was friends with all the children in the neighborhood, both Jewish and Bulgarian. We got along very well.