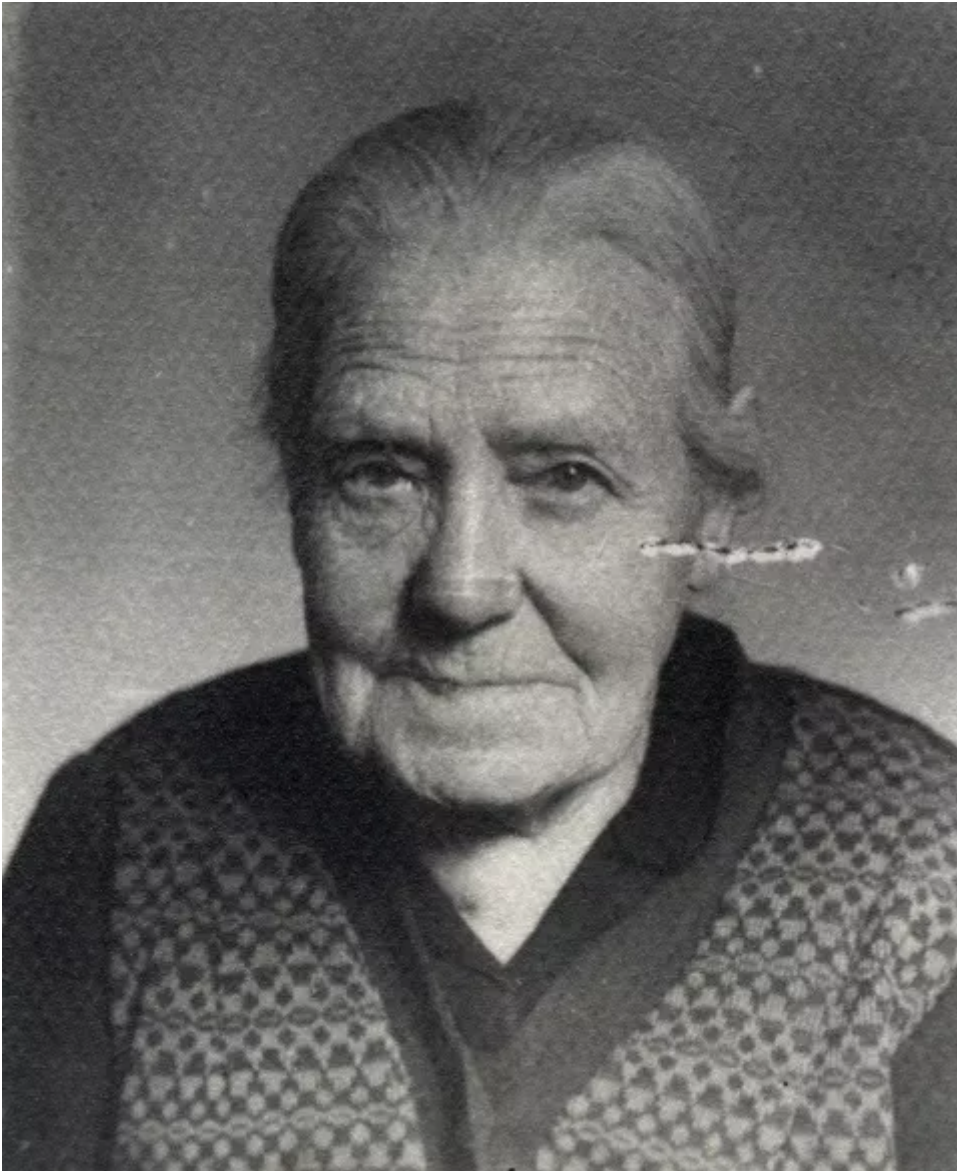


Matilda Shekerdjiiska



This is a photo of my mother Matilda Shekerdjiiska. The photo was taken in the 1970s in Dupnitsa.

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.

We had both Bulgarian and Jewish neighbors. During the Jewish holidays we welcomed our Bulgarian friends. Whole families came to visit us. My mother's meals weren't very different from the traditional Bulgarian cuisine, which includes a lot of vegetables and meat. But there were some differences, for example, Bulgarians didn't make leak balls. My mother made very nice rice with chicken, okra with chicken, hotchpotch with aubergines and meat, pastries with cheese, minced meat, leaks, and spinach. She also made very nice crackers. My mother was a very good housewife.

All my father's brothers got along very well. I have seen my father and his brothers gather with friends and play poker. We were united. My mother gathered with her Jewish friends at home.