

Aron Alkalai's Uncle Yosif Lazar



This is my uncle Yosif Lazar as a university student. The photo was taken in Kyustendil in the 1920s. He graduated law and became a lawyer. He married and lived in Plovdiv. From there he left to Israel at the end of the 1940s. He died at the age of 101 years.

I know almost nothing about my mother's parents. I remember that they lived in Kyustendil, where I went in the summer during my vacations. My maternal grandfather Rafael Lazar had a small goatee. I do not know what he worked. I do not remember my grandmother Vinucha Lazar. She was a housewife.

In Kyustendil I visited my mother's relatives and my father's brother who lived there. Once my parents decided to go to Kyustendil. I was not allowed to go with them then. I was very young. But I had decided that I should definitely go. I got on a truck, which was on its way to Kyustendil and so I arrived in the town. I sat on the sidewalk there and waited. My parents saw me and were absolutely surprised. They had to leave me at one of my uncle's for some time.

My mother's name is Regina Alkalai and she had two brothers and two sisters. [Yosif is the eldest brother.] Her other brother's name is David Lazar. He was a merchant and lived in Kyustendil. One of my mother's sisters was Buka and she married in Sofia. Her other sister was Matilda and she lived in Dupnitsa. Her husband's name was Konorti and he was a tailor. Unfortunately, that is all I know about them.

My mother was a teacher in the Jewish school in Kyustendil. Probably she also worked as a teacher in Dupnitsa but for a short time. After she married, she stopped working under the influence of my father. He wished that she would only be a housewife. My mother knew French very well. She also

played the guitar and knew songs in Ladino and in Bulgarian. I have seen her singing a melody and playing on the guitar to herself. In the evenings she would go on the balcony and hum a song for 'good night'. Times were more peaceful then and people were less demanding. We did not buy many clothes, did not rely on material things so much and people lived more peacefully than they do now.