

Maurice Leon's First False Identity Card



This is the first false identity card that I was carrying on me while hiding during the German occupation. On the identity is written that it was issued in Athens on 18th May 1943, my name is Mavropoulos Giorgios, son of Christos and Eirini, born in Kavala in 1918; my profession is merchant, my religion Orthodox Christian and my nationality Greek. After the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki, the Germans ordered all Jewish shops to have a sign stating that they were Jewish shops, and each Jewish house to have a Magen David. We had to wear a yellow star. Later on deportations to Poland started. My family and I were gathered, thinking about what we could do in order to leave Thessaloniki. I remember we had a Greek friend from Salonica, a lawyer. He would often visit us and saw our agony. He was telling us that if we jumped in the sea and swam across to Olympos, we had better chances of surviving than if we followed the German orders. And soon we started to find ways to escape. We went to the railway station from our house by foot. When we arrived we got on the train. Of course, we were carrying false IDs with us. Mr. Mavropoulos had helped us with the false IDs. And so we managed to get to Athens. When the train left Thessaloniki, we knew that someone, who had been paid, would help us later on. The train had to stop at Platamonas where the Italian occupation Zone was beginning. At Platamonas the Germans were checking IDs. But we had paid the German officers' translator. My nephew Sam Leon was married to Riri. Riri's mother had been remarried to a doctor called Theocharis. It was Theocharis, Riri's stepfather, who knew the translator and gave him money to let us pass. The German officer saw our 'Ausweis,' our Christian IDs, the translator said they were okay, and thus we managed to pass through the checking point.