

THE PERGOLA AT THE HOUSE IN GALATA



This photo was taken in 1940. While I was in Spain, my parents had moved from Ortakoy to a house in Galata. Therefore, when I came back, I went to live with my parents in Galata. The place was called "Galata, Küçük Hendek". The apartment had a garden and a pergola. One day my second cousins on my mother's side came to visit us from England. They were two sisters, one of them was Gladys on my left here. I don't remember the name of the other one. A friend of mine took this picture as a souvenir. The two sisters returned to England after that and I never heard from them again.

I went to Spain when I was 20. When I finished school I started working at an office writing letters in French. There was another friend there, Jak Behar, from Kuzguncuk [a district on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus where Jews used to live] who was doing the correspondence in German. We were dreaming of travelling. Then one day my friend came and said: "Shall we go to Spain?" and I said: "Yes, let's go".

We left for Spain in 1934. We went to Barcelona. At first, we started to sell textile products at open markets and observed what others were doing. Most people were doing this kind of business, so we learned it too, and started doing it. Then I started doing painting work. I was painting ties. My friend couldn't do this work, so he returned to Turkey after one year. I was alone then. I stayed in Spain for 2.5 years. Then there was a revolution during Franco's time [Spanish Civil War, 1936-39]. All business stopped and I had to leave. I went to France on a British ship. The British had sent warships to Barcelona to get all the foreigners out. They only took the foreigners who wanted to leave, but they did not take the Spanish. That is how I was able to leave. The ship was going from Barcelona to Marseilles. So I packed my bags and went to the port. I presented my passport and went on board.

The ship set off and arrived in Marseilles. My elder brother was in Marseilles then. I sent a telegram to my brother and told him I was in France. A few hours later I received a reply that said: "Don't move, we are coming to get you". When he said "we" he meant him and his partner. My brother came in the morning and he took me to Avignon, where I stayed for a year. I didn't do anything there. There was no work. So I waited for news from Istanbul. When my time for military service came, they let me know and I returned in around 1937 and did my military service.

Actually, my military service doesn't really count as having done military service at all because I served only for 6 months and paid to be exempt from the rest of the time. I served at the construction department of the army corps. My job was to type letters in old Turkish. I knew old Turkish of course.