

The Deschilton Family



This photo must have been taken around 1905 in Bursa. The people standing in the back are from left to right, my uncle Yomtov Deschilton, my aunt Luiza Deschilton and my father Rober Davit Deschilton. Sitting in front from left to right is my paternal grandfather, Avram Deschilton and my paternal grandmother Bulisu Deschilton. They had this picture taken before all the children got married and left home. They wanted to have a family souvenir, so that's why they had the photo taken.

My father's father, Avram Schilton, was born in Bursa. I do not remember the dates at all. He lived in Bursa, but later on he came to Istanbul. They lived in Bursa for long years, but during World War I, the Greeks came to Bursa, so probably because they wanted to be safe they came to Istanbul. My paternal grandfather dealt in trade, he was a very good businessman. He was a very serious person. He dressed very fashionably, he was always very smart. He was tall and very handsome. He did not have a beard but he did have a mustache. They did not change their family name. They were Deschiltons. Later on I took out the "de" at the beginning. My grandfather could speak Turkish, Judeo-Spanish and French. They used to speak in Judeo-Spanish amongst themselves. He did not have anything to do with politics or any political party. He did not take part in any social or cultural activities either.

My father's mother, Bulisu Schilton (nee?), did not wear a wig but she did wear a scarf over her head. She also dressed fashionably and liked to wear a lot of jewelry, necklaces, bracelets etc... She would mostly wear her kolana [Ladino for gold chain].

Yomtov Schilton was born in Bursa. He married Rita Danon and they had two sons, Alber and Mishel Schilton. Yomtov was in the stock exchange and was very well off. However, I don't remember exactly when, there was a crisis at the stock exchange once and he lost heavily. I remember, he went to Paris in a panic, on his own. His wife and sons stayed with us while he was in Paris. They stayed with us for 2 years. During that time, my uncle Yomtov went into the insurance business. When he ameliorated his situation, his family went to Paris, too. Then he had a daughter there, Suzi Schilton. Yomtov died in Paris, but I do not know when.

My father's sister, Luiza Abuaf (nee Schilton) was also born in Bursa. She married Salamon Abuaf. Salamon Abuaf had been born in Istanbul. They had two daughters, Sara and Fortune. Luiza died in Istanbul and her husband, Salamon died in Izmir.

My father, Robert David Schilton was born in Bursa. He was a good and kind-hearted man. He was quite talkative and had a very modern mentality. He was a serious man. He had a lot of friends and he liked his friends very much. They were very intimate, and the same with his neighbors, too. They were all like brothers and sisters, I remember quite well. My father studied until secondary school. He studied at the Alliance Israelite Universelle school in Bursa. After he finished secondary school [8 classes] he started to work. My father did not do military service because he was a foreigner, he had a foreign citizenship. His mother tongue was Judeo-Spanish. He also spoke Turkish and French. With my mother and his parents however, he used to speak in Judeo-spanish. My father's business was very good in Bursa. They lived there for many years. He used to be in the insurance business. The reason they came to Istanbul was the war. During the war they had problems with the Greeks and they had to run away. They came to Istanbul in a hurry to escape the Greeks. They came to Istanbul to live more comfortably. I was about one year old at the time. They did not have a home when they came to Istanbul and they went to live with my mother's family. They lived with them for 2 years. When they came to Istanbul, their economic situation was average. My father worked at a bank in Istanbul, in the insurance department. The bank's name was "Banque Francaise des Pays d'Orient" [the French Bank of Oriental Countries]. It used to be located in Karakoy [a district in the European side of Istanbul] at that time. He worked there for many years.