

Hayim Benmayor With His Wife Sara And Son Alber



This picture was taken in the 1890s at the photo studio called "Studyo Vafiadis". You can see my maternal grandparents Hayim and Sara Benmayor and my uncle Alber Benmayor. I never knew my maternal grandparents. I only knew my uncle Alber. As you can see, they are wearing clothes from those times. My grandmother is wearing a beautiful gold chain. She gave that chain to my mother later on.

My mother's father, Hayim Benmayor, (I do not know his birth or death dates) was a very nice man. He was from the best of families. When I say "the best of families" I mean "rich and educated". They were quite a big family. He had two other siblings about whom I know nothing. Hayim Benmayor studied in Salonica because he was born there. He was a well-educated man and quite talkative. He was tall and dressed very fashionably in clothes that were the highest fashion of the time. I do not know what he did for a living. My mother's side of the family spoke French and Greek because they had all been born and raised in Salonica. They all spoke Greek perfectly.

I never got to know my mother's mother, Sara Benmayor (née Faraci). She was a sick woman. She had a very high degree of diabetes and went blind consequently. She had 3 more siblings but I do not know anything about them. My grandmother used to wear long-sleeved dresses of her time.

She used to wear jewelry and had a "kolana" [Ladino term for "long gold chain"] which later became my mother's. She would wear her jewelry when she went out to go somewhere; not that they would go on outings very often. They had a lot of family, cousins, sisters, brothers, and they would gather in one another's homes. One other thing I remember about grandmother Benmayer is her going into a depression after her son Jak Benmayer went to the USA to settle there. She died when she was 52-53 years old.

When my mother's father, Hayim Benmayer came from Salonica they settled in Bakirkoy [an old Jewish district on the European side of Istanbul]. My mother and her brothers, Avram, Mishel, Jak and Daniel all grew up there.

My eldest uncle, Alber Benmayer went to Germany on business and he lived there for years. Then some years after my grandmother had died, my grandfather went to live with his son in Germany. My uncle bought a beautiful house in Germany, a house with 6 floors. He was in the razor blade business. He had a factory. My uncle, Alber Benmayer, (I don't know his birth date) died in Istanbul in 1951. He was married to Lidya Benmayer and had a son, Mario Benmayer.