

Haim Benmayor And Emilia, Fortune And Jozef Danon



This photo was taken in 1931. From left to right you can see my maternal grandfather Hayim Benmayor, my uncle Dani's wife, Emilia, my mother Fortune Danon and my father Jozef Danon. They took this picture as a souvenir for my grandfather, who was going to Germany to join his son there. The photo was taken at Elmadag [a district in Istanbul, on the European side, over the Golden Horn] but I don't know who took it. I was not with them on that day, I was at home with the maid.

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.

My eldest uncle, Alber Benmayor 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 father Jozef Danon, I don't know his date of birth, was born in Istanbul. My Dad was a very good man, and he did a lot of good deeds for people. He was always doing good to people in need. He exhausted himself trying to help people. He was also a member of one of the charity organizations of the Jewish community, called "Sedaka u marpe". He used to take a lot of things there, like hats. I distinctly remember him taking them hats, I don't know why or what they were doing with those hats but hats it was. He worked very hard for this organization of the community and tried very

hard to help.

My father was a very talkative person. He was skillful and hardworking. My father had a hardware shop. He was the only one there were no other hardware shops around. He used to do a lot of business with Anatolia and his business was very good. We were very well-off. I grew up with a nanny and we had a maid, too. Unfortunately my dad died in January 1936. I was 9 at the time. He had a heart attack.

My mother, Fortune Danon, (I don't know when she was born), was born in Salonica. She came to Istanbul when she was 13. My mother was a quiet person, she did not speak too much. She spoke Greek very well and French, too. She had studied in Greek in Salonica. Then here, she studied in French, I don't know which schools, maybe there was a French school in Bakirkoy. Her French was very excellent. She was very intelligent.

She was not a very authoritarian mother. She raised us all with great economic difficulties after my father died.

My mother used to read a lot. That is why there used to be a lot of books in our home. She used to read books in French, all sorts of books. After my father died, she started reading books about diseases. She got obsessed with illnesses, heart diseases, other diseases. She would read these all day long and would not go out.