

The Native House Of Nissim Kohen



This is a photo of part of our yard on Gyueshevo Str. It was taken in the 1930s in Sofia. In this long house only the part around the first window is built with bricks. All the other parts are built from adobe. My paternal grandparents with their children lived in it. Later the second window, where the room of my grandmother was, was joined to the family of my parents. We lived in the rooms with the first two windows. Next comes a door and on its right lived the family of uncle Rafael Kohen. In the back of the yard there was an outside toilet and a massive building where my uncle Elijah Kohen lived.

My grandfather's house was on 12 Slivnitsa Street. Later the street was renamed to 7 Gyueshevo Street. Our house was made of adobe and at first it had only one room and an entrance hall. Later another room was added as well as another extension, which was the house of my uncle Rafael Kohen. My father's elder brother Eliya Kohen also lived in that yard. His house was the most solid one. My father Mihael Kohen took a half of one of my grandfather's rooms and enlarged it. He also built another room with a small entrance hall where he lived with his family. There were some inconveniences. The toilets were outside and we had no running water inside. There was a tap on the street which we used. We had electricity. Later we had running water in the yard, but not in the house. The street, on which we lived became all muddy when it rained. And so did most of the streets in the Jewish neighborhood.

When my grandfather was still alive, on Pesach we gathered in his room together with my father's four brothers and their families. The table was long. On one of its sides there was a minder (a low and long bench) and on the other side there were chairs. 20 people could sit on that table. In the middle of the table we placed the three boyos a plate with seven meals and the so-called harosa,

which was made of apples, honey, walnuts and maybe dates. At first, we performed the ritual of washing the hands. The women presented a basin to my grandfather and to us all to wash our hands. Then we drank a glass of wine. My grandfather drank a little wine and read the prayer. We accompanied him. One of the boyos was broken in half and put in a towel, which the children carried on their backs to show that they were leaving to Israel. The food was festive. There was usually soup of matzah and boiled hen. The matzah was dipped in egg and placed in the soup to boil for a while. Another typical dish on that day was leaks balls.