

## Gracia Albuhaire With Friends In The Karnobat City Garden



This is a picture of a group of young boys and girls from Bourgas, who came to visit us in Karnobat in 1941. We were introduced to each other and several couples were formed. The picture was taken in the Karnobat city garden. My cousin Berta Yulzari is in the front center, she was dating the boy to her right in the back, Nicko Varsano. My friend Sara from Karnobat is next to Nicko - she was dating Ruben, the boy next to her. I am to the left, and in the bottom left is my boyfriend Albert Madjar. We used to gather in the Jewish quarter. We chatted, we made 'soirees' and 'jours' - day trips - and we walked a lot.

Our friendship circle was quite interesting. I was a poor girl, therefore the town's boys didn't pay much attention to me. Moreover, I was quite small and thin, and I went to school dressed in a black overall with a white collar and a beret. I didn't raise any interest as a woman. When this group of young men came from Bourgas, I really fell for Albert. I was introduced to him in the evening but he didn't really notice me. The next evening I decided to find a way to attract his attention. I had a blue and white dotted cotton costume. It was like the color of my eyes. I put it on and it looked perfect on me. I wore large sandals, given to me by my cousin Fortune from Sliven. I had beautiful curly hair, which I usually plaited into two braids. But on this occasion I let my hair loose and turned the plaits into curls. I made myself look smart and in the evening I went out in the street together with the company. When I arrived, the boy who I liked asked the others to introduce me to him. On the next day, while I was going to school, he met me in the street, looked at me, smiled and said: 'Hey, kid!' And since then he always called me 'My little kid!'

During the Holocaust we used to write letters and that is how he wrote to me. We saw each other only when he left for the labor camps in early spring. And we only met for four or five minutes - the time when the train was waiting at the station. And when he was coming back from the camps, we again met for five minutes. He was in many camps. There was mail, so I got letters from the camps. We wrote in Bulgarian. Once he even played a trick on me. I received a letter from an

unknown man, a Jew named Nicko Varsano, who wanted to correspond with me and get to know me. But when I read the letter, I realized that it was from my boyfriend because I recognized his writing style.

There is another interesting thing: his parents didn't accept me during my school years, because we were poor. I even got a letter from his mother that she would report me to the teacher if I were dating her son. This did not offend me, as he was the one who actually mattered to me. Yet, after the war he himself offended me. Then I told him that I wasn't a match for him and we broke up. Albert left for Israel in 1948-1949. He had a shop for roasted kernels there, inherited later by his children. During one of my visits to Israel, in Herzlia, I met him and had a formal lunch with his family. His wife knew a lot of things about me.