

Mazal Asael's Mother Delicia Eshkenazi On The Holiday Of Purim



My mother is wearing a Serbian costume for Purim. The photo was taken in the 1920s in Sofia. My mother had come to Sofia before my father's first wedding that probably happened in 1916. My mother had already married my father when this picture was taken. My mother's family lived in the town of Nis, in what is now Serbia. They moved to Sofia, Bulgaria at the beginning of the 20th century. My mother Delicia had four sisters and two brothers but one of her brothers drowned in a river while they were still living in Nis. All my mother's sisters and brothers were born in Nis, where there was a big Jewish neighborhood. My mother's family members spoke mostly in Ladino. They also spoke Serbian because they had lived in Serbia. My mother knew a lot of songs in Serbian and

she sang very well. I suppose that there was a certain reason that made my mother's family move from Nis to Sofia. The fact that one of her brothers drowned in a river near Nis might have also influenced their decision to leave. My mother Delicia was a hairdresser. I remember that there were special curling irons at home that she used in her work. She had worked as a hairdresser before she got married. I suppose that she learnt this trade while she was living in Nis. She went to school in Nis up to the fourth class. My parents were not very religious and they didn't go to the synagogue very often, only on the high holidays. I used to celebrate most of the holidays in the Jewish school when I was a student. We all gathered at home together with our neighbors on Pesach. Sometimes we gathered with some relatives in the house of an aunt of my father's who lived far away from our house. We used to lay a big table with matzo and boio (bread balls made of water and flour without any salt and yeast); there was only kosher food on the table. My mother took care of the whole household. She had separate dishes that she used on Pesach only. Tinkers used to pass through the Jewish neighborhood every year and tin the copper dishes so they always looked as good as new ones. We did that also in order to make sure that the bread did not have any contact with the dish. After the holiday we put away the dishes until the next year.