

Mico Alvo, Danny Alvo And Tori Modiano



This is a picture of myself (on the right), my cousin Toris Modiano (centre), and my brother Danny (on the left).

My mother's sister Lily, was married to an Italian Jew. His name was Dario Modiano and he was an Italian citizen. They had two children. Tori, whose full name was Salvador, and a daughter, Rosa, who now lives in America.

Lily had a maid for 15 years who came from a village in Chalkidiki, Katina. She would protect Rosa and scold Tori. Whenever they would argue she would protect Rosa.

My brothers' name is Daniel. He is one year younger and he was born in October 1923.

Usually in Sephardic families the first child that is born takes the name of his parental grandfather and the second one takes the name of the maternal one. I got named Haim Alvo, while my brother was named Danny from Daniel Saltiel.

I was born at home. Even my sister that was born seven years later she too was born at home.

We had the sister of an uncle of mine who was a midwife and she would help in every birth to deliver the baby to the family. That was her job, she was a midwife.

Her name was Karolina. She was well known in the Jewish community because she could help deliver the baby at home.

My mother was taking care of me at home until I went to school. We used to have a woman at home, a governess as we used to call her.

She used to come at around ten in the morning and leave at night. We had one for two years, others had for more years than us.

We grew up learning three languages. Our maids were usually Greek, and they were the ones that we would speak Greek with.

We spoke French to our parents and they spoke Spanish to each other. With grandmother and grandfather we spoke Spanish.

Our mother was strict. We used to fight with my brother when we were young, because we would be jealous of each other. If mother came out, she wouldn't ask whose fault it was, she would give us couple of slaps and that was it, we would sit calm.

When my mother had things to do in the kitchen, we would play in our room. We didn't have many toys then. We had some books and we had started to read. But not many toys.

Later, when we grew up we had the "mekanos", which was a very interesting toy.