

## A Group Of Friends In The Countryside



This is a picture of a group of friends. My family owned the Varlamidis estate opposite the Military Academy. In the weekends, we would go there on our cutter, disembark, and eat there.

During the Nazi occupation my father was getting money, because people were selling out. You would sell your goods, without being able to bring new ones.

There were two things that you could do with these money: Either turn it to sovereigns (sovereigns were very expensive then and it was forbidden to buy them, but you could still find it), or buy land property. Many were selling their land because they were in great need.

We had bought a piece of land opposite the Military Academy that went all the way down to the sea. We bought it from Mr. Varlamidis who was the manager of the National Bank of Greece.

He knew my father and they had really good relations. He was already on pension when he said to my father, "I have this piece of land. Come, and I will sell it to you".

After the war, according to the law that cancelled all buying and selling transactions that took place during the Nazi occupation, you either had to give the difference that the person that sold the land property to you was asking and then keep it, or the transaction would be cancelled, he would give you back the money that you had paid him and he would take his property back.

That was the law. Because they figured out that most of the people that sold things at the time were in great need and did not sell them at the right price.

So if you had bought it in a lower price say, you would have benefited from the difficulty of the situation. And my father did many such transactions at that time.

I remember there was a big tobacco warehouse in Antigonidon Street, which we bought for about 300-400 sovereigns. We had bought it from a Christian, whose name I don't remember at the moment.

But he was rich. They gave us our money back and that was it. Others, asked us to give them the difference, we reached a compromise and that was it.

After the war, many of us from our group of friends lived around the "Analipsis" area and had used to be members of the Sailing Club. All together we founded the "Friends of the Sea Club".

I am one of the founders of this club. We made a shed that we put our sailing boats in. Cutters, boats, and other things. We bought a big piece of land.

At some point, I used to be the cashier, because I used to cover up for any shortages. We had hired a guard, and slowly the club developed. At that time the club was very small. Everyone used to come there, our girlfriends too.

Before Mari, I had some other affairs. The girls that we would go out with would come with us at the Sailing Club. I had a small cutter that we used to take with my friend Freddy Assael and sail.

I also had a second degree cousin of mine, Saltiel, whom I knew from school too. Our fathers were first degree cousins. He had gone to the Athens University to study as a doctor and he served in the army too.

At that time the first academy for female officers, nurses etc., was established in Chalkida. From the first lot that graduated, they had sent here three girls at the 424 Military Hospital.

He knew them, so he brought them for company on the cutter. We would go around on the boat. On Sundays we would leave in the morning and go to Peraia. We would have difficulties sailing out, but on our way back, the air would be on our side.

I remember a time that we had sailed to Moudania on an excursion, men and women on the boat, all together. I had the jeep too, and we would really enjoy the company.

The three nurses and the two of us. The three girls were Christian, so things were a bit more difficult. All three of them were really nice girls. I didn't flirt with any of them, it just didn't happen. It was pure friendship, nothing more.

Sometimes we would go out at nights dancing etc., but nothing more we were just friends. I think they came mostly for the ride.