

Ernestin Farhi And Friends On The Occasion Of Purim



The photo shows my mother Ernestin Farhi, nee Kalmi, sitting first on the right, and the mothers of my classmates. They are wearing masks on the occasion of Purim. The photo was taken in the yard of our big family house in the period around 1930 to 1935. I do not know what their fancy dress costumes mean, but the Turkish influence is obvious. My mother was Ernestin Yakov Farhi, née

Kalmi. Born and raised in Ruse, she was a wonderful woman and mother. She knew three languages ? Ladino, Bulgarian and French. She was a great cook. She organized her time perfectly and had time for everything. She could not only do embroidery, but also make things from satin. She could also play the piano and paint. She graduated from the French College in Ruse. The teachers there wanted her to study in the Musical Academy in Bucharest because at that time there was no such academy in Bulgaria. My grandfather Yakov Kalmi did not allow it, however, because he thought she would become a ?shafrantia? [meaning a woman of easy virtue]. Instead of leaving for Bucharest when she was 17 years old, she was thus married to my father, who was 34 years old at that time. My mother came to Shumen from Ruse with her fashionable clothes, her refined tastes, the piano, ancient music sheets and her French books, and suddenly found herself in a patriarchal, provincial environment. Being very young at the time her wedding was arranged for financial reasons, she accepted her fate. She never acknowledged to me that the environment in the Farhi family oppressed her. She rarely shared anything and did not like to bare her soul, nor did she require us to confess our heartaches to her. Nonetheless, all her actions were infused with her own independent spirit. She fought for a long time to free her family from the dictatorship of Grandmother Senyora, my father's mother.