

Adela Hinkova In Front Of Her House Of Birth



This is the house where I was born, which I hadn't visited for many years. It's an old Turkish house. I'm with the tenants. The photo was taken in 1960 in Vidin. Our house was on a very interesting street: one of its ends was a dead one. No one would pass along that street and a vehicle would be a very unusual sight. We didn't have electricity. We got that late, around 1922 or 1923. Until then we used a gas lamp and kept warm by using a stove built into the wall. My mother burnt wood and put its ashes in sacks. We put the ashes in the water, because it was very hard. When we lit the stove and when the smoke subsided and there was only ash, my mother would take the ash, put it in a tin near the stove and place a lid on it. My father lit the stove when he got back from work. We sat in the cold during the day and I was always moaning that I was cold. The house was old. The rooms were big and got warm very slowly. I had to clean the rooms. The floor was covered with wooden boards and I had to clean them. I have unpleasant memories of that. The rooms were big and there was a corridor where we gathered on Pesach. There was also a small staircase, which was the place of my dreams. I sat there to learn my lessons, do my homework on my knee. There was little furniture at home: two beds for my parents, a table with some chairs for eating and a table for the flowers, which was a small and round one, with three legs. In the other room there were two beds for my brother and me, two wardrobes and a chest of drawers. My mother would hide the jam in that chest. But sometimes I would open the chest and eat the jam. One of the wardrobes was a brown one, the other with a black door, which could never be closed. My father was a good man, but he could repair nothing. We asked a friend of ours, Liko, for help when there was something to be repaired at home. My mother took very good care of the house. We never had carpets, but we had rugs. My mother made bands from the old sheets, gowns, and cotton clothes. My father brought threads from the market, which were the base for the rugs, then put them in a cauldron with paint. This took a long time. My mother was very neat and when she had a lot of washing up she got up at 5am. She would make a fire in the yard, would put the cauldron with the water on the fire, then she put the sacks with ash in and started washing the sheets, which were

eight in number. There was a trough, in which one could fully lie down and she rinsed the sheets three times in it. There were some vendors who sold us water from the Danube, it was very smooth and we kept it in a barrel in the cellar. When I returned from school, I would find her still washing the sheets. She also put laundry blue in the washing, which gave the sheets a nice tint. She hung the washing in the yard and it froze in the winter. Then we put it inside to get dry. There was a lot of hard work to be done. My mother starched all the bed covers so that the embroidery could be seen. She made the starch and did the starching herself.