

Leon Lazarov With His Mother, Brother And An Aunt



The picture was taken in Kyustendil, around 1930. My mother Sara Chelebi Lazar, nee Bohor is standing, the other woman is my aunt. I am around 12 years old - with a handkerchief in my pocket, and my brother Solomon Nissimov Lazarov is around 5 years old.

I was born on 8th February 1918 in Kyustendil. I grew up with my brother Solomon playing many games with him. He was born in 1923. He graduated in chemistry from the 'St. Kliment Ohridski' Sofia University. He has a son - Anri Solomon Lazarov, born in 1954.

I remember many hours spent with the children from the neighborhood. In winter we usually went sledding from Hisarluka hill nearby Kyustendil. In summer we burnished the sledges with glass-paper so that they would slide better in winter and waited impatiently for winter to come. The sleds were large and heavy and in order to reach the hill's peak, from where we used to coast down, we had to push them all the way up. And that was all for the sake of those five minutes of pleasure while coasting down. Yes, we were restless. When we were down, at the foot of the hill, we went straight up again pushing the sleds, and that were five to six kilometers, to the top! When we were little kids, not all of us had sleds, so the older children let us coast down next to them. Later each one of us had his own sled. Yet, one had a choice - if you didn't want to push your sled to the top, you could stay at the foot of the hill and play.

There was a tradition in Kjustendil whenever such winter toboggan-slides were organized [for children and adults], at the foot of the hill a small orchestra was performing. So you either push the sled, or you play at the bottom. I often chose the latter and played the violin. Usually it was so cold, that I had a special task - every half an hour or whenever it became too freezing for us, I gathered five to six musicians and I brought them home to warm up for a couple of minutes, and then we continued playing. In another half an hour, I took another group home, and so it went during the whole day.