

Joseph Saltiel With His Brother Mentesh Saltiel And Friends



This is a very old picture. It was taken well before the war, probably in the 1920s, in Thessaloniki. Here you can see my father, Joseph Saltiel, second from the left, and the third one is my uncle Mentesh Saltiel, one of my father's younger brothers. I don't know the other two people in the picture. My father was born here in Thessaloniki on 5th June 1881. He spoke Spanish and German and, of course, Greek. He was beautiful, tall, dark-haired, attractive. He was not very funny; he was serious, probably more serious than he should have been because he had three girls and that bothered him. He dressed in a suit wearing a tie, and was never neglected, hat of course and gloves, he was always very well dressed. A very elegant man. Uncle Mentesh was partners with Uncle Sabetai and they were selling window glasses, mirrors etc. They were the first to sell such glasses in Thessaloniki. Uncle Mentesh had two boys with Rachel Pinhas, Samiko and Moris. Uncle Sabetai had Samiko and Julia and he was married to Rene. Somehow those two are always together into everybody's head. When we speak of one the other comes automatically to mind. When we were children we had a big yard. In this yard we played and every night Uncle Sabetai gathered us and made us sing "be, a, ba, be, a, be, ba, bo." He would say the letters and we would sing like stupid "I, le, I, la" and then he would response with a cry of admiration "Aaa" or a cry of exclamation, "Ooo." He kept us busy; he gave us money and then took it back.