

Serena Cernis



2005 This is my cousin Meri Bryant's granddaughter Serena Cernis. The photo was taken in Canada in 2005. My mother's brother Alber Finanser opened a wholesale textile shop in Asirefendi caddesi. He had a partner called Katalan. Alber's first wife died when she was only 23. They had a daughter, Meri, who lives in the USA currently. Alber got married again - to Estrea from Kadiköy. They had a daughter, too, Ayten. They lived in Yazici sokak, two or three buildings away from the famous Dogan Apt., which used to be called Botton Han then. They did their shopping from the window, with a basket tied to a rope. Concerning the laundry, Meri told me that all the neighbors gathered on the roof terrace, lit up fires in the open, on which they heated water in enormous cauldrons, and did their washing all together. They then hung the washing to dry on ropes that were extended from each other's windows on opposite sides of the street, from one end to the other. I witnessed the laundry hanging in the streets thus all the time. Lots of photographs of this exist and attest to it, too. Meri and Ayten attended the Ste. Pulchérie French School. After a long and successful career of 40 years as a dress-maker - she had an atelier in a part of her house, with 5 Mexican girls helping with the sewing. She made haute-couture 'sur commande' clothes for fashionable ladies who came to her house for the fittings - Meri went to university at the age of 69, got her BA in French, then went on and obtained her master's degree from Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Alber Finanser lived in Istanbul, but moved to the US, to live with his daughter Meri, after his wife died. He died there in 1988. .Serena is Benny's daughter.