

Avram And Belja Altarac



These are my paternal grandparents, Avram Altarac, and Belja Altarac, nee Atijas. Everybody used to call her Bea. The photo was taken in Sarajevo in 1925.

My grandfather was a plumber by profession. He did all kinds of installation work and also owned a little shop on Bascarsija Street, where he worked alone. It's a long street, very famous in Sarajevo and known as a market place; all kinds of craftsmen used to have shops there.

My grandfather was one of those craftsmen and sold all kinds of products made of sheet metal in his shop. My grandmother was a housewife and took care of their six children; one of them was my father.

My paternal grandparents were religious. They kept the Jewish traditions. They celebrated every holiday, and that's how my father learnt how to pray and read in Hebrew.

Grandfather often attended services. They observed Sabbath and the kashrut as best they could. We visited them very often, especially during the holidays. I'll never forget when my grandfather recited the Kiddush.

I remember it so vividly because he never drank; he was an outstanding non-drinker. Between themselves my grandparents used to speak Ladino.

My grandparents' house was in the old part of Sarajevo city. They lived in a very modest house with a little courtyard. They didn't have much money and thus took care of the housekeeping themselves, without the help of servants or maids.

After we moved to Split we didn't see them very often, only during the holidays when we visited them and when the whole family got together.

My grandparents were around eighty years old when in 1941 they were taken along with other family members to a death camp and killed. For neither of them, I know exactly where and when they were killed.