

The Vostrel Family



Here is my mother Rosa Atijas and my father, Leon Altarac; officially Juda. My sister Lea and me standing in front of them.

He worked as a barber in Sarajevo. When we moved to Split in 1934, he worked with a master in a famous barber's shop for a long time.

Later he became a nonkulo [attendant in a synagogue]. His duty was to take care of the synagogue, the arrangement of the 'sfarim' [prayer books] and tefillin.

When he became a nonculo, we moved to the apartment of the Jewish Community which was in the same building where the temple was.

My parents had two children: I was born on 12th October 1929 in Sarajevo and my sister Lea, or Lilika, was born on 10th April 1939 in Split.

She is the only one in our family who wasn't born in Sarajevo. My mother was a dressmaker by profession, but she worked as a housewife. And of course she also took care of my sister and me. Our mother raised us in a traditional way. We observed the holidays, but not in a religious way. Every holiday was celebrated: For Pesach we had the seder and ate all the traditional food.

There was always fish on Friday evenings. My parents didn't demand of us to go to the synagogue or to pray; maybe that's a pity because therefore we don't know much about the traditions. Neither my mother nor my father influenced our opinions.

They gave us the opportunity to choose and decide for ourselves how much we wanted to know about Judaism. At home we spoke Croatian, but sometimes, when our parents didn't want us to understand something, they spoke Ladino, and they did especially so with Grandmother Lea. She lived with us and was a great help to my mother.

My sister and me had no duties or obligations except school. Most of the day we spent playing with our friends. Because we lived in the building of the Jewish community, we had the opportunity to participate in and attend all the cultural, religious and sports events.

'Jarden' was a Jewish Cultural Association, where all the Jews gathered. We went there very often. We liked it very much and most of our friends were from this group.