

Henriette Mizrahy With Her Sisters



These are the Schonfeld sisters around 1907. The photo was taken in Bucharest. From left to right: my mother, Henriette Mizrahy [nee Schonfeld], Mina Solomon [nee Schonfeld], and Annie Segalescu [nee Schonfeld].

My maternal grandfather, David Schonfeld, was born in 1851 in Iasi. He came to Bucharest as a grain merchant after the death of his first wife. He worked for over 30 years as the administrator of the Filantropia Jewish cemetery in Bucharest. It was in the small house at the entrance of the Filantropia cemetery that my grandparents' three daughters were born and raised. Mina, Henriette,

and Annie Schonfeld went to the 'Moteanu' boarding school, where they were taught to treasure the value of money and to earn their existence. They all worked as clerks until they got married.

Mina Solomon was born in Bucharest in 1896. She worked as a clerk until she married Moritz Solomon. He was a self-made man, an oil man who had a small refinery at the entrance of the town of Ploiesti. He built himself a four-floor apartment house, with two apartments per each floor, in Bucharest, on Sfintilor St. They were the only ones in the family who had a car and a chauffeur. The ties between the three sisters were very strong. In particular, my mother and Mina were extremely close and this is how they remained until the end of their lives. Mina died in Tel Aviv in 1986.

Annie Segalescu was born in 1900 in Bucharest. She was the most religious of the sisters, but she had her limits; she didn't wear a wig. She married Eugen Segalescu, with whom she had a son, Gabriel Segalescu, born in 1926 in Bucharest, seven weeks after I was born. She got divorced in 1939, remarried, but kept her maiden name. She emigrated to France and died in Paris in 1982.

My mother was born in 1898 in Bucharest. From the moment I could understand and judge, I realized that the day of 29th March - my mother's birthday - was a holiday in our home. The house filled with flowers, the phone didn't cease to ring, and, in the evening, when all preparations had been finished, the family gathered together with some couples of friends who were as close to my parents as their brothers and sisters.