

Henriette Mizrahy With Her Sisters



This is my mother, Henriette Mizrahy [nee Schonfeld]. The photograph was taken in 1917 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. 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 was filled with flowers, the phone didn't cease to ring, and, in the evening, when all preparations had been finished, the family gathered with some couples of friends who were as close to my parents as their brothers and sisters. As for the presents, they were my father's 'job.' I remember the 'bestowment' of such a gift, I think this was in 1936 or 1937: In my parents' bedroom, in front of me, and maybe my sister Mira, my father presents my mother a nicely wrapped small package. She opens it and reveals a red-blue box of 'Shalimar' perfume. Delighted, my mother kisses my father and thanks him. He urges her to open the box and try the perfume. On doing that, my mother lifts the top that covered the bottle, which causes an object wrapped in paper to fall on the floor. We rush to pick it up, my mother unwraps it and we are all speechless! My mother is holding the most beautiful brooch that we have ever seen!