

Rashel Levi (nee Pinkas) In The Champions' Fair In Vidin



The Champions' Fair in Vidin [port city on the right bank of the Danube in Bulgaria, 220 km. away from Sofia]. My uncle Yosif had been a member of a Champions' Party. On this picture he is the first one on the right and in front of him is my mother. The others are some Jews from Vidin whom I don't know. In the picture there are only Jews. The picture was taken in a studio. There is neither indication which the photo studio was nor any other inscription on the back of the picture.

My mother, Rashel, was from a wheat-trader's family – her grandfather and her father Sason were intermediary wheat-traders. They didn't use to plough or mill the wheat but to trade with it. It had to be kept in big warehouses built only of ashlar. Their windows were right under the roof. At first the wheat had to be bought and kept there until it was sold. Warehouses like those supplied carriages and ships. Vidin's plain is quite fertile and besides the Danube is a convenient navigable route. My mother (after finishing a Jewish school and junior high school) was the last one to get married. She knew Ladino and Ivrit, which she had probably studied at the Jewish school. She was the youngest child in the family. Her brothers and sisters – Sara, Soultana, Haim and Yosif were already married and everybody had settled down in a different house.

The house where I was born was the house in which my mother was born. It was in the Jewish neighbourhood right in front of the synagogue and near the Danube.

We were often visited by different people, but mostly relatives. For instance, on a big holiday everybody would come to our house after the synagogue, because we lived right in front of the temple. Mom would usually not be able to go to the synagogue, because she had to prepare everything. Grandma would be one of the first. She used to have a paid seat (one of the best). She had always insisted on that. Papa was the one who would pay for it. In most cases mom would stay at home on some holidays like Erev Sabbath. Rosh Hashanah was an exception. So when they got out of the synagogue after Erev Sabbath, for instance, they would come to our place. They wouldn't have dinner at our place because everybody had already cooked dinner at home, but they would have a boiled egg, drink a glass of rakia (sort of brandy), and wish Sabbath Shalom to each other.