

Avram And Donna Kalaora With Friends At The Seaside



This is a photo of my parents together with some relatives and friends. The fifth and sixth from left to right are my father Avram Avram Kalaora and my mother Donna Avram Kalaora. I am the most tanned child on the photo. I am ten years old here. I do not know the names of the others. I only know that this is the first and the last time my parents went to the seaside. Those were very poor times. Our home was in the old Varna district Kadar baba. It was not a Jewish neighborhood and its name is Turkish. I don't know what it means exactly. We lived in a small old house with a little garden. Its floor was made of soil and covered with straw mattresses. Everything was primitive, there was no running water, no electricity. We only had a big room and a kitchen, which was also very big. The toilet was made of ordinary boards and there was a hole in the middle of them. It was in the yard. I remember that we also had a small cellar with a wooden door, which opened inwards. Despite all this misery, I keep very nice memories from my childhood. But I don't remember my parents taking us to a resort or even to the sea; and Varna is a seaside town, after all. Varna was the seaside center of Bulgaria. There were around 70,000 citizens in the town, of whom 2,500 were Jews. The Jews were mainly employed in trade or worked in private companies. For example, I remember very well the place where I lived at some point – a two-storey house right next to the synagogue, on 2 Prezviter Kozma Street. Two brothers, who worked as tinsmiths, let out the two floors. There were also rich Jews in the town, but not many. Most of them were craftsmen, workers or a few of them were merchants. Varna was a beautiful town, visited by many merchant and passenger ships, although its infrastructure was not as good as it is now. The most famous neighborhood was Kadar baba. A very well organized Jewish community lived there, though it wasn't a specifically Jewish neighborhood. The district had a Turkish name like most of the districts in Varna at that time. Although it was a Bulgarian city, there were many Turkish people living in it and in fact almost all people in the city spoke Turkish.