

Josif Kamhi With His Brother Perets Kamhi, Sister Donka Dimitrova And A Neighbor In The Vitosha Mountain



This is a photo of my brother Perets Kamhi, my sister Donka Dimitrova, nee Kamhi, and me as children. Perets is first from right, Donka is first from left, and I am between them. Behind us is the neighbor of my father's store, who sold vegetables and whose name was Kolyo. The photo was

taken on the Vitosha Mountain in the 1930s. We could not afford to go on vacation. But my father often took us on excursions to Vitosha near Sofia. Once, when we did not have any money, we went on foot from Sofia to Boyana Lawns, a region in Vitosha. The distance is around 10 kilometers. We carried food, spent the whole day there and returned by tram. We really must have been in a bad financial state if we could not afford to go there and come back by tram. My grandfather Perets Kamhi had a butcher's, which he probably passed on to my father. It was on Klementina Blvd, present-day Stamboliiski Blvd and on Paisii Street. I do not remember if they sold kosher meat. My father was forced to move from that store, because he had only rented it. Another butcher took the store, probably by offering higher rent. He continued selling meat and working with the customers that my father had attracted. My father opened another butcher's but it was further away from the center and he did not have so many clients. So he went bankrupt. That happened around 1940. He started work in a factory processing leather. Before he went bankrupt, my father earned good money. When he moved the shop, our financial situation worsened. At that time we also had to pay a big sum every month as installment for our new apartment. We managed to pay all the installments by 9th September 1944. My mother Berta Kamhi also worked but from home. She had a sewing machine and made handkerchiefs and singlets. We, the children, helped her. My brother Perets Albert Kamhi and I went to the central market and sold the so-called 'ikonomia' - very fine sand, which was used in dish washing. We offered it packed. We also sold toothpicks, paint and shoelaces. We sold them by going from house to house, and we got the goods from the merchants who owned shops.