

Suzi Schilton's Classmates



This photo was taken in the 1950s. My wife Suzi Schilton studied at the St. Benoit [French Catholic school] high school and this is a photo of her and her classmates as a souvenir of the end of the school year. My wife was a very good student at school, she was very hardworking. Her teachers loved her very much. She did her homework always on time and got along with her friends very well. I don't know anyone else on this photo.

My wife, Suzi Behar Bitek, was born in Ortakoy. Her native language is Judeo-Spanish. My wife's real surname was Behar. When the Surname Law was passed, some Jews took Turkish names, and my wife's family added the name Bitek [turkish for only one] to their surname. My wife's father, Menahem Behar bitek was from Ortakoy, and he was very religious because his own father, Moshe Behar was a rabbi. Menahem Behar therefore raised his daughter with a very strong religious identity. Her mother, Rebeka Rifka Behar (nee Azuz) was a dressmaker. She used to go to the houses of ladies and sewed all day.

My wife, Suzi graduated from the St. Benoit Lycée [French Catholic high school]. We are distantly related to her family actually. Our relatives in Ortakoy used to praise this girl a lot. After I broke up from my first fiancée, Beti Konfino, our relatives said Suzi was a great girl, a very good girl. So I made a decision and one day they introduced us at one of our relative's homes. Then they said, "now that you know each other, why don't you go out together for a while"; so we started going out to get to know each other better. This did not last long because my wife's father was a very strict man; he did not think we should go out together for 6 or 8 months. After a short time he wanted me to make a decision, it was either Yes or No. So I said Yes. But he said, "It is not enough for you to say, yes, I agree. You have to get engaged". So we got engaged in a matter of 1-2 months.

My wife never worked, she is and has always been a housewife. She is a wonderful cook, she cooks great Jewish dishes. My favorite Sephardic dishes are, 'koftikas de prasa' [leek meatballs], 'pishkado kon guevo i limon' [fish with an egg-an-lemon sauce] and borekitas [pastry].