

Albert Hatem



In this photo you can see my paternal grandmother's brother Albert Hatem. Albert Hatem married a woman named Rasel. Rasel and Albert had a son they called Heskiya. Heskiya had gotten his name from my grandmother's father. Heskiya Hatem later changed his name to Robert Hatem, a much more modern name. Robert Hatem married a woman named Soli and it is actually Robert who introduced me to my husband.

My paternal grandmother's father, Haskiya Hatem, was undersecretary to a chief rabbi who had been awarded a medal by the sultan. The sultan used to reward those who proved themselves useful to him with a medal. The chief rabbi and his advisors ran the community. These advisors were called undersecretaries. I don't remember anything much more.

My paternal grandmother, Rashel Baruh (née Hatem), was from Daghamam. Daghamam, was in the hilly part of Kuzguncuk. [a neighborhood on the Anatolian side. It is across Ortakoy, which is on the European side. Both of the neighborhoods lie along the Bosphorus]. The Jewish people living in Daghamam either moved to Haydarpasha [an important neighborhood of Istanbul. All the trains that go to Anatolia, depart from this central train station, located in the neighborhood.] or to Ortakoy, due to the fire which broke out in the neighborhood. According to the reports of the time, this fire, which broke out in the 1915's, was a big disaster. The firebrigade was not able to arrive in time, and thus the wooden houses were burnt down like dominoes, thus leaving many families homeless. According to my grandmother; when everybody was trying to save something in panic, a woman was trying to save her iron. Who knows, the reaction of her husband to an unironed shirt, may have crossed her mind!

Rashel Baruh had two brothers, named Rafael Hatem and Albert Hatem, and two sisters, named Sara Aruete and Recina Kordovero.