

My Father-In-Law



This is a photo of my father-in-law, Stefenya Akkoen.

Stefenya Akkoen, married Mme. Rebeka in 1905. (I don't know my mother-in-law's maiden name). They had settled down in Kuzguncuk, and had always raised their families there. [Jewish district on the Asian side]

My wife's father was a hard-working and a very clever man. He was engaged in the customs business. During those times most of the customs officers were non-Muslims [they typically knew trade and languages better]. Later on my father-in-law rented a hall on the Kuzguncuk pier, and ran a club operating as a casino during weekdays, and a cinema on weekends. My father-in-law was also a skilled enough bridge player to become the Bridge Champion of the times. Unfortunately, he was poisoned by something he ate, became sick, and lost his ability to speak. Naturally, we closed down these businesses slowly when he got sick.

Her mother, Rebeka was a very good housewife. They had four children, including my wife Suzan. They educated them very well. My wife had two brothers and a sister.

The eldest brother, Lazar Akkoen, was born in 1909 in Kuzguncuk. He was very religious. He married Sara (her maiden name was Aksiyote) from Kuzguncuk. She was a very good housewife. They had three children named, Rifka, Medi and Ishak. Lazar was working as a vice president at the Deutsche Bank in Istanbul, when he was raising his family. During World War II, in 1942 all the Jews working at German companies were dismissed from their jobs, on an order that came from Germany. Lazar, who became jobless over a night, got very sad, and emigrated to Israel [Palestine]

with all his family. They struggled to survive there for a long time. Finally Lazar found a job at the Discount Bank, and became the president of the bank in time. They had a very good life. Their children received a very good education, and are all working at very good places. They married off all of their children. They have many grandchildren. Now, they even have children from their grandchildren. Unfortunately Lazar died in 1984, and was buried in Israel.

My wife, Suzan's brother, Moiz Akkoen, was also born in Kuzguncuk. He grew up there. He married Seli Alfandari. They had two sons, named Seyfi and Avi. He worked at an import company called "Porsemay Glassware", in Tahtakale [a neighborhood], Eminonu [commercial district on the European side] for long years. He became a partner of the firm later on. They used to import porcelain dishware, crystal glassware, and crystal chandeliers from abroad, especially from Czechoslovakia, and Germany. Their life was very pleasurable and happy. During the events of 6th and 7th of September in 1955 [16], their stores were ruined, all their items were broken and looted. This sad event affected Moiz very much. He emigrated to Israel with his family. He opened up a "Faux Bijouterie" [French for "imitation jewelry"] workshop there. Later on, he also exported this jewelry to Europe. He worked at this job for a long time. He retired and closed down his business later on. He has seven grandchildren from his sons. Though they have aged a lot, they are full of life. Seli has been receiving treatment for osteoporosis, for a long time. Moiz has some slight sicknesses, but they manage.

Their sister Ester Akkoen, was also born in Kuzguncuk, and she grew up there. Ester used to work at a firm owned by a very rich man named Ahmet Diliboz, who had come from Russia. This man brought with him a lot of pearls, when he was escaping from Russia. He sold them here, and founded this firm. This is the way he used to tell us. This firm was engaged in export and import business. Ester worked as a secretary in this firm, for a few years. Later on she married Albert Eskenazi. They had three children named, Rifka, Suzi, and Moiz. When their children grew up, they emigrated to Israel. Ester and Albert also emigrated to Israel in 1966, after their children.

Rifka chose to be a housewife after she got married. On the other hand, Suzi worked at one of the branches of the Discount Bank in Tel Aviv for long years. Later on she got married, and had children, but continued working in spite of having had children. She became a Division Manager. She still continues working for this bank. She also had grandchildren. Their son Moiz, on the other hand, became a total vagrant. Unfortunately, he became the black sheep of the family. He usually disappears for a long a time, then comes back. The family becomes very miserable upon each of his returns home. Unfortunately we lost Albert in 2002; he is buried in Israel.

All the siblings, including the very religious Lazar, are all liberals. All the siblings have close ties with each other, and love one another. We always liked spending time with each other, and we've always been like siblings. We still talk at least twice a week on the phone with each other, and meet once a year.

We lived together with my mother-in-law for long years. When my wife's siblings emigrated to Israel, she also went to stay with them, during certain periods of the year. And she died when she was with them in Israel, and was buried there.