

David Kohen With His Brothers Aron And Leon Kohen And Their Father Bucco Kohen



This is a photo that reminds me of my brothers: Aron Kohen (the first from the left) and Leon Kohen (the second from the right), and my father Bucco Kohen (the second from the left). The photo was taken in Haskovo in front of our house in 1974. It was taken on my father's 86th birthday.

My father was an atheist, but tolerant to religious people. He never mocked at the religiosity of my mother or my grandmother. He was a broad-minded person. He was the chairman of the Jewish community in Haskovo. He would always put on a praying shawl for the high Jewish holidays. He also had a prayer book.

In Haskovo we lived in rented apartments. We moved to different places every year or so. My mother was a great housekeeper and cleanliness loving person. When we were to move to a new place she would always stay to the end to brush the wooden floors with hard brush, sand and soap until they literally started shining, so that the people who were to come and live in the place after us might say that a civilized family had lived there before them. I remembered this as one of the burdens of our endless moving from place to place. After that we lived in a house owned by an Austrian company for production of tobacco, 'Nikotea,' for which my father worked as chief accountant. It was in the town's suburbs near the tobacco warehouse. My father was well paid at this company and he also received bonuses. When the Austrian officials came to carry out an inspection, the whole enterprise was alarmed. My father always made a good impression because he kept the books very precisely. The plant's director was a Jew and his name was Pinkas. His son was my classmate in the Jewish school.

While working as a chief accountant, my father figured out that we needed a house of our own. He decided to become a self-dependant tradesman. Of course, he couldn't compete with the large companies and their capitals. One day he told my mother about his idea of owning a house. But he didn't have enough money to carry out his plans. Then my mother went to the sleeping room,

turned something over in a chest, found some money and put it on the table in front of him. All this happened in the presence of my second brother, Aron Kohen. My father's eyes opened wide and he asked her where she had gotten this money from. She said she had saved it from the sums he had given her in order to keep the household. That's how my father bought a house in Haskovo.