

## Aron Alkalai's Mother Regina Alkalai



This is a photo of my mother Regina Alkalai before she was married. It was taken in Kyustendil on 15th June 1918. My mother loved singing and playing on the guitar on the terrace at home.

My mother was a teacher in the Jewish school in Kyustendil. Probably she also worked as a teacher in Dupnitsa but for a short time. After she married, she stopped working under the influence of my father. He wished that she would only be a housewife. My mother knew French very well. She also played the guitar and knew songs in Ladino and in Bulgarian. I have seen her singing a melody and playing on the guitar to herself. In the evenings she would go on the balcony and hum a song for 'good night'. Times were more peaceful then and people were less demanding. We did not buy many clothes, did not rely on material things so much and people lived more peacefully than they do now.

I know almost nothing about my mother's parents. I remember that they lived in Kyustendil, where I went in the summer during my vacations. My maternal grandfather Rafael Lazar had a small goatee. I do not know what he worked. I do not remember my grandmother Vinucha Lazar. She was a housewife.

I do not know how my parents met. When they married, my father was living in Dupnitsa. After they married, they lived in various rented flats in the center of the town. My parents spoke Bulgarian, but their parents spoke Ladino. After they married, I was born in 1921, my brother

Rafael in 1923 and my sister Riri in 1928. The house where I was born had two rooms and was very humbly furnished. When I was young, we did not have electricity, we used gas lamps.