

Sophie Pinkas



This photo was taken in 1941 in the Town Garden in Vidin. We dressed in Bulgarian folklore costumes on some of the holidays we celebrated at school. We danced Bulgarian folklore dances, 'rachenitsa'. I didn't sing very well, but I loved dancing and playing. We always played on the square after the manifestations. My parents had friends - Jewish families, with whom they often gathered on holidays and celebrations. Sometimes a few families gathered to play poker. There were two separate poker tables for the men and the women, but I have no idea why. The most often celebrated holiday from the national ones was 24th May - the day of culture, enlightenment and education. When I was a student we went to manifestations and marched through the town singing songs about St. Cyril and Methodius and then we danced traditional Bulgarian folklore dances. I don't remember celebrating other holidays common to Jews and Bulgarians. Maybe 3rd

March - the liberation of Bulgaria [from Turkish rule] but I vaguely remember it. We, the Jews, celebrated all our Jewish holidays. The Jewish community in Vidin was very united. Most of them were merchants and most had nice houses. Our house was also one of the more beautiful houses in town. Naturally there were a lot of poor people, but there was no hatred and rivalry between the people. The Jewish families in Vidin lived in a separate quarter called 'Kaleto'. Vidin was divided by a big fortress wall, it was called 'kale' and most of the Jewish families lived in the same part of the town. The Jewish school, the synagogue and our house were also in Kaleto. Some of our neighbors were Jewish, others were Turks, with whom we got on very well.