

## Nissim Kohen's Mother Sarina Kohen With Friends



This is a photo of my mother Sarina Kohen (in the center), nee Haravon with friends, taken in Kyustendil around 1918, before she got married.

My mother's kin comes from Kyustendil. My mother's parents Yuda and Bohora Haravon lived there. I went there every summer when I was a student in the first grades of the Jewish school. My grandfather was a tinsman and my grandmother - a housewife. My mother's kin is very large. She had six brothers - Yosif, Rahamim, Shimon, Nissim, Chelebi and Mois Kohen. What is interesting about them is that my grandmother's parents left as early as the beginning of the 20th century, around 1906-1907 to the blessed land (Palestine at that time) to die there. They left their lands, their children and set off. My mother Sarina Kohen was 8-9 years old then. As far as I know my grandparents have graves in Jerusalem.

There were a lot of Jews in Kyustendil. They had their own synagogue and a community house. My grandparents lived in the Jewish neighborhood, which was around the synagogue. I remember that they lived in a small house, which had a ground floor and another floor. A relative of my grandfather's lived on the ground floor. His name was Manoah, and on the next floor lived my grandfather's family and my uncle Isak Haravon.

My mother had graduated primary school and started studying in a vocational school which she did not finish due to lack of money. She kept her notebooks from the vocational school for many years.

They contained sewing designs, which can be drawn only by a professional designer nowadays.

My parents met in an interesting way. During World War I or probably in the end of the war, my uncle Azarya Koen was injured and was sent to the family of my mother in Kyustendil to be looked after. There he decided that my mother would be the perfect for wife for his brother, my father. After the war ended and my father returned from captivity, his brother Azarya told him that he had found a very nice girl from Kyustendil for him. My father retorted that he did not need a wife and Azarya should marry her if he liked her so much. But his brother was already married. There were other attempts to bring them together at that time. But in the end, they met by accident when my mother came from Kyustendil to visit her brother Buko Haravon. Later it turned out that she was the girl that uncle Azarya was talking about to my father.