

Jakov Kalef And His Sister Sara Kalef



This is my granduncle, Jakov Kalef, and his sister Sara. Sara died young and I don't remember her. She is buried in the Belgrade Jewish cemetery. I don't know who the other woman is. They are dressed up in national Serbian clothes. The photo was taken in the S. Alkalaj studio in Belgrade in 1924.

My grandmother Matilda Kalef was the pillar of the family. She rented out the family apartments and maintained the stores. Her older brother, Granduncle Jakov, helped her. We lived right next to

each other, number three and number five Gospodar Jovanova. He took care of her and our family. It was as if he was our grandfather. Granduncle Jakov was on the board of the Jewish community. He was a cantor in the synagogue. Granduncle was involved in Jewish communal life and he kept my father and grandmother informed about everything. Because we were like one family and he was the head of the family. In fact, Jakov and Grandmother were the heads.

My granduncle Jakov was one of the main people on the board of the Jewish community. He worked a lot, he was very involved. I know that he got a decoration, a medal, but I don't know what kind or what it was for. He got it from the King. [Editor's note: It isn't known which king presented it to him, or if it was at all presented by a member of a royal family.] He even went to the palace. When King Petar was young, 16 or 17 years old, they gathered kids his age from different families and once a week they went to play with him, to socialize with him. My cousin David Kalef always participated in playing with King Petar. I think the family must have had very high standing, if this was allowed.