

Sami Danon's Engagement Party



This photo was taken at my brother Sami's house in 1952. It was his engagement party at his home. On the left you can see my brother Sami Danon, beside him is his fiancée, Fortune Algazi, who later became my sister-in-law, then you can see me with my elder son Sami in my arms. My husband, Izak Sarhon is standing beside me, then Adirne Danon, my brother Vitali Danon's wife, Vitali Danon and behind him our cousin, Sami Schilton. It was a nice engagement party at home. All relatives from their side and our side were present. We set a very nice table with wonderful food. There was dancing and lots of photos were taken. We had a wonderful time that day.

I had 3 brothers, 2 older than me and one younger. My brother Alber was born in Istanbul in 1917. He had meningitis when he was 5. One day he was visiting our grandmother (my mother's mother). He was jumping on the cushions and then he hit his head on something. My grandmother put him to sleep and he slept till morning. When he woke up, he couldn't speak. My Dad took him to the doctor, and the doctor said: "you will not tire this child; he will start to speak very slowly". After a couple of years, we had a cousin in Tunel, Viktorya Danon, my father asked her: "Please, let Albertiko come to you for a while, you have cats". So Alber went to stay with her for a while and indeed he started to speak there. He did not go to school. There were teachers who came to the house to teach him French. He would beat the teachers, he was sick really. He actually started to speak when he was 10. What a pity, because when he was little he was one of the smartest kids ever. Now, the doctors tell us not to put a child to sleep if he takes a fall or hits his head etc... But my grandmother did not know that. When my grandfather came home that night she even told him: "Please, Hayim, do not make any noise, Albertiko took a fall" and she had him sleep till morning. And he got meningitis. But later on, he grew up and he even did his military service for 2 years. Then, when my uncle came back from Germany and opened his jersey factory, he took Alber to the factory where he worked until my uncle died in 1951. Then he went to work for the Kastro family as an office boy and retired from that job. Then when my mother died, we took him to the Old People's Home [6](#) in Haskoy. He lived there for 10 years, then took a fall and died in 1999.

Vitali was born in Istanbul in 1922. He studied primary school and the secondary school until my

father died. He was 14 when my father died, and had to start working. He worked for a florist in Osmanbey near our home, and brought home some money. He would take flowers to clients. Later on he worked at a big shop in Beyoglu [very famous district, otherwise called "Pera", in the European side of Istanbul], called "Galeri Kristal" as salesman. They sold glassware and crystalware there. When he was 14, Vitali met an Armenian girl called Adirne Donaloglu, who lived in Ferikoy [a district between Osmanbey and Kurtulus, where a lot of non-Muslims, especially Armenians used to and still live]. They fell in love and later got married. The families did not want this marriage of course but while Vitali was doing his military service, he came on leave once and they got married secretly, by civil marriage only of course. The families did not know but I did because Adirne was my friend. They had two daughters, Linda and Rita. Linda was born in 1949 and Rita in 1954. They studied in state schools. Linda married an Armenian, Simon Kokyan and she became Armenian, which means she became a Christian. They had two daughters as well, Karolin and Karin. Rita, on the other hand, married a Moslem boy, Emin Kaplan and she converted and became a Moslem. They had a son called Akin. Vitali died in Istanbul in 1982. His wife, Adirne, died many years before him, I don't remember exactly when.

My third brother Sami was 1.5 years younger than I was. We grew up together and we were in the same school. After he finished primary school, my mother sent him to Saint Michel [a French Catholic high school in Osmanbey]. I do not know why, but he did not finish St. Michel. Then he started working and later he opened a perfume shop with a partner. Then he got married. My brother Sami always worked in the same job. Then he had heart problems and then one day, one Friday in 1989, he was coming home from Sirkedji [a business district in the european side of Istanbul] in a taxi and he had a heart attack and died in the taxi. The following day was the Bar-Mitzvah of my grandson, Izel and we were preparing for that. It was a terrible time for me. On the one side I was grieving for my brother and on the other side there was the happiness of the Bar-Mitzvah of my only grandson. It was a terrible clash of emotions. On the Saturday night, we celebrated the Bar-Mitzvah among the family members but it was entirely spoiled for me.