

Bohumil Steiner And Hermina Steinerova With Their Children



This photo was taken at a studio in Kolin. In the middle is Bohumil Steiner, my grandfather, then on the left Hermina Steinerova, my grandmother, with my mother Marie Synkova, nee Steinerova, and her younger sister Anna Schwelbova, nee Steinerova. I'd say that this photograph is from the

1910s. Here my mother could be at most twelve years old. This photograph has atmosphere, both little girls are wearing sailor outfits.

My grandfather was born in 1871 in Kovansko, Nymburk region. But back then it fell under Kolin. He lived in Kolin, where he was in the textile business, I remember the store. He died on 20th October 1932, a year before the death of my mother, his daughter Marie. Probably in Kolin, because somewhere I had some documents about what Grandma had paid the funeral service, and that was all in Kolin. So he's most likely got to be somewhere in the old Jewish cemetery in Kolin.

My grandmother was born on 10th August 1869, so she was two years older than Grandpa, which was very unusual back then. On the contrary, men used to be for example twenty years older. I've also got a younger husband, so I'm continuing the 'tradition.' After Grandpa died, my grandmother moved with my mother's sister, Anna, from Kolin to Prague.

Exactly when I'm not sure, but it probably took a while for them to wind down the store. Because Grandpa had a textile store in Kolin, in this little street close to the town square. I remember that the entrance was right on the street, and in the courtyard there - it's as if I saw it in front of me even now - there were cobblestones, that had grass growing up between them. Back then, as a child, I was very interested as to why there was grass growing up between the cobblestones there. A colorful impression like that stays with you your whole life.

My grandmother and Aunt Anna also had some little store in Prague, in Smichov, but they went bankrupt right away. They then had it in Zizkov, and again went bankrupt. I guess they weren't good at it, my grandmother had probably never done it. She died sometime during the war, most likely in 1942. I don't know if she had any siblings. I later lost contact with them, because after my first mother died, my father remarried, and although that second mother of mine was very kind, she was afraid of me having contact with that original family. But I used to go to Zizkov around once a year anyways. I remember that they lived at 5 Milicova Street. But as soon as I walked in, my grandmother would start weeping, because as soon as she'd see me, she'd right away feel sad that her daughter had died. I remember her as being very slight, this proper grandma, delicate. But that's probably a bit of a fabrication after all those years.

I remember my grandfather being very tall, and my grandma small. My mother and aunt were also relatively small, I probably inherited it from them. But Grandpa Steiner, he was tall. So at least my brother, Jiri, isn't such a shrimp. I used to envy him that a lot. But on the other hand, I've got my grandfather's eyes, their shape, setting, look, color. Our father had grey eyes, Mother was dark-eyed, but I've got quite intensely blue eyes after Grandpa. Genes are genes.

As far as my mother's parent's religiousness goes, there I don't remember anything. We used to go see Grandpa, I remember him playing with me and I used to get fabric scraps from him. And I know that Grandpa used to take my brother Jiri, who was five years older than I, with him to the fair, where he always used to display his wares. But I don't remember them celebrating any holidays, for example.