

Mother Of Helena Kovanicova Olga Munkova



In this photograph, taken in the 1930s, my mother is standing on the steps leading out of our courtyard into the garden behind our house. My mother is wearing a coat made with a special fur, which was called 'Cinderella.' It had a grayish beige tabby color, and when you blew on it, it was brownish.

I myself once had a coat from handmade fabric, which I bought in Tuzex, with a 'Cinderella' collar. I liked wearing it very much. Later my granddaughter Helenka even wore it, who also liked it very much. I had it made in a tailor's shop that used to be on the first floor of the Platyz Palace on Narodni Street in Prague. On the ground floor they had a display window with beautiful things.

My mother went around nicely dressed, although her closet was never especially overflowing. My mother had things made by Mr. Chmelicek in Prague, on Malatova Street, who Aunt Elsa discovered. Aunt Elsa was a real fashion plate. The tailor Chmelicek was very skilled, but it took him terribly long to fill orders. Later I also had things made there. Sometime in 1938, maybe even earlier, they had Mr. Chmelicek make my first nice coat. It was dark blue with a nice collar that looked like it was nutria or beaver, but was rabbit. Still before the war, Mr. Chmelicek made me a checkered suit and a rust colored plaited skirt. After the war I had him make me a dress and blouse.

As far as cosmetics go, our mother didn't use makeup, she only used huge amounts of powder. All her life she was always powdering her nose. She used to say that it was so it wouldn't be shiny. She had sort of water in a beautiful round bottle with a long stopper. It was most likely some sort of cleanser. When my mother set off into town in the afternoon, she would always wash her face with this water. Then she'd make the rounds, stop at the delicatessen, at the Lustigs' textile store.