

Gertruda Glasova With Her Sons Jan And Martin Glas In Bukovno



This is me with my mother and brother in Bukovna near Jihlava, where we used to spend summers. Today Bukovno is named Lesov. My mother was from Jihlava, and so liked this part of the country very much. And I liked it too, Jihlava was an island of the German language in Czechoslovakia, and I think that the time this photograph is from was still my German period. This is because my life was divided, more or less by force, into several phases. I was born into a German-speaking family from Prague, so my mother tongue was German. When I was supposed to begin attending school, my parents decided that I'd attend a Czech school, because we weren't Germans and wouldn't continue in increasing the number of German-speaking inhabitants of Prague. We then spoke Czech at home as well. While my father did know Czech spelling and grammar, he had a problem with pronunciation. My mother, on the other hand, learned the language through everyday conversation on the street, and had perfect pronunciation, but made errors in writing until the end of her life. Back then, when I started Grade 1 and didn't know a single word of English, the head teacher, Mr. Korda, had to translate every word into German for me. At the end of my first year I could already read and write Czech; by the end of Grade 2 I'd forgotten how to speak German, but understood everything a child of around six understands. Then, after the war, I wasn't able to speak any German for a long time; I had a mental block. The family we used to go visit in Bukovno were named the Brims. They weren't any sort of anti-Semites, but I do know that when at the end of the 1930s the situation was already very tense, they said that next time they won't let a Jewish family stay with them at their summer house. After the war, the Germans from Jihlava and its surroundings were deported. There were also no longer any Jews there either, and once, when she'd returned from postwar Jihlava, my mother sadly told me that she didn't recognize even one old lady there. I visited Bukovno again in 1954, after 16 years, and I was very surprised at how small everything was... In my memory it was still the way a small child sees it: everything was a lot bigger than I was. Right at that time, the villa that we used to stay at was being redone. Today it's an old-age home.