

Ruth Halova



This is a picture of me, taken in Cesky Krumlov in the 1930s.

The members of the Krumlov Jewish community represented an insignificant fraction of the entire population of 9,000, about one percent. Most of them were employees of the paper factory in Vetrni, whose owners, the Spiro family, were also Jews. We didn't have a rabbi, the one from Budejovice used to come see us, but we did have our own cantor, Mr. Karel Krebs. He was a nice young man, who was most likely from Hungary, and devoted very much of his time to young people. He taught us religion, put on plays with us, and so on.

The construction of the Krumlov synagogue was financed by the Spiro family, and I think that they were far from being bad employers. Besides building the synagogue, they also founded the Krumlov Jewish cemetery, and the Christian church in Vetrni. We lived in one apartment building that belonged to the factory. The building was divided into five apartments, and I remember that we even had subsidized electricity. This only applied to electricity from wall outlets, so we mostly used table lamps, and very rarely switched on the [main, ceiling] lights.

Only now, with the passage of time, do I realize how hard it must have been for Grandma to make ends meet on Mom's modest salary for a household of four. I actually had this normal, happy childhood. I've got to say, that until the time the Germans began with their Turnvereins and began goading people against us, our life flowed on in uninterrupted peace. During the summer we went swimming, in the winter we skated and sledged.