

## Kurt Kotouc And His Brother Hanus On A School Trip



This picture was taken in 1940. Mr. Novotny, our teacher from the fifth grade of elementary school was organizing trips for us. In this picture we are standing in front of the look-out tower in Radhost. The picture was probably taken by Mr. Novotny. I am the first from left in the upper row and my brother Hanus is standing beside me. He was older than me but probably our teacher took him on the trip with us.

I attended a Czech general school in Brno on Mendlovo Square. A significant part of the school was made up of the sons of the proletariat. School attendance was, of course, mandatory. The parents of Roma or circus performers got around the attendance law by sending their kids to school at the end of the school year, so that their child would receive a report card. Perhaps they were getting 5, the worst grade, or they failed but on paper it was proof of attendance. I remember a grotesque scene where a circus performer came to school and he chased the teacher with a whip because the teacher didn't want to give his son a report card.

In grade five, I went to the Tatra Mountains with my elementary school. In those days, trips like that were quite rare. We had a very active teacher who organized trips. His name was Novotny and he taught Czech language and thanks to him it became a favorite subject of mine. Otherwise, I usually spent my free time with friends. In the summer, we would swim in the Svratka and in the winter we would toboggan on Kravi Mountain. We would go to a park near my apartment, back then it was called Obilnak; it was a wild place, where bushes of all kinds grew. There were all sorts of different places to climb and secret places where we would play, shoot from sling-shots or horse around in different ways. All that only until 1940.