

## Otto Kotouc And His Family



This is a picture of my family taken in Brno in 1935. From the left there is my father, Otto Kotouc, my brother Hanus Kotouc, and then I with my mom, Stella Kotoucova. My father was born in Oslavany in 1895. Dad probably studied in secondary school. It is possible that he was a trained weaver because textiles were something he really knew a lot about. He was nineteen when World War I broke out in 1914, and so he entered the Austro-Hungarian army. I'm not exactly sure where he served but he got shot in the foot on the Italian front. He didn't talk about the war very much. After marrying my mother, they moved to Brno where dad engaged in textile trade. In Brno there were many textile factories producing a great deal of textile waste that could be further processed. My father would buy the leftovers and do just that. The leftovers were unwoven and processed

differently, depending on what kind of textile it was. He wasn't particularly successful in his trade; I know at one time the company fell apart completely. I think he was trying to assert himself. My mom was born in Mohelno in 1902. Although she did not go to university, she was a very educated woman in her day. After elementary school she attended a secondary school for women, which was a German school in Brno, where she learned subjects ranging from maths and Czech to cooking. After marrying my dad, she stayed at home, but she helped him with the company. My brother Hanus was born in 1924 in Brno. Before the war he studied at the industrial secondary school but he finished his last two years after the war. My brother still managed to have a bar mitzvah that our relatives, the Steckerls, organized in Miroslav. I think we lived in relative poverty. We lived in an old rental unit in a two-bedroom apartment with a kitchen, a hall and without a bathroom. There was a little garden and gazebo that we also rented. In the apartment, everything was very basic, primitive almost. I remember as a small child my mother bathed me in the kitchen in a basin. My brother and I shared one small room: we each had our own bed and my father's typewriter and desk was also in our room.