

Hanus Kotouc



This is a picture of my brother Hanus Kotouc. It was probably taken in some studio in Brno at the end of the 1930s.

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.

Hanus was transported to Terezin in 1942. Gradually, my brother worked in a number of locations. At one time, he worked in the disinfection squad where he used very dangerous gas; I think it was called Ventox. For some time he worked in a kitchen as a helper and so at least he could eat a little better. My brother and I were in Terezin until October 1944, until a series of transports practically wiped out the ghetto.