

The Neighborhood Of The House Where Helena Kovanicova Lived



This is a picture of the neighborhood in Brandys where I used to live. It was taken in the 1930s.

Across the street from our house in Brandys nad Labem, where today stand socialist prefab apartment buildings, once used to stand an old linden tree, under it a pump and behind it a wall that surrounded a large garden. There was a tiny chapel built by that wall. I remember that before the war there used to be a procession from Prague to Stara Boleslav that used to walk through Brandys every Sunday. The pilgrims would always wake us up in the morning, when they would sing "A thousand times we greet thee" and because they had to walk a long ways, they would stop under the linden tree by the chapel, have a drink of water, wash their feet and rest.

Around that spot across our house was where one of my first suitors used to always look out for me. He was named Jelinek, and we met on the train on the way back from the last prewar, so-called high school games. He always stood there with his bicycle and looked over into my window. Though I knew that he was standing there, it would never have occurred to me to go down and say something to him. I guess I was shy. During the war the Germans threw that Jelinek into jail, during a wave of arrests of university students.