

The Alter Family In Luze



This is a photograph of my mother's family in Luze. Standing on the left is my mother's brother, my uncle Jiri Alter. Then also standing is my grandfather Max Alter, holding the little girl in a white dress, who is my auntie Marie Alterova. Sitting in the middle is my grandma Kamila Alterova, holding my mother, Helena, on her lap, then two boys standing - my mother's brothers Bedrich and Karel, who's on the far right. As my mother looks to be around two, my estimate is that the picture was taken sometime in 1903. My mother, Helena Polakova [née Alterova] was born in 1901. My mother was one of five children, her siblings were named: Jiri, Karel, Bedrich and Marie. My mother's oldest brother, Jiri Alter, was an astronomer. When Hitler came to Czechoslovakia, Uncle Jiri got an offer to go work at an observatory in England. He took the offer, and left with his family for safety. In England Uncle Jiri's daughter, my cousin Erika, wanted to join the Czechoslovak army, but as they didn't take women she joined the English one. She learned perfect English, so even native Englishmen couldn't understand why it said in her passport that she was a Czechoslovak citizen, they couldn't believe that she wasn't a native Englishwoman. Jiri's son, my cousin Bedrich, left for Palestine. Uncle Jiri's youngest son, Arnost, was arrested for illegal activities back when the transports weren't on yet, he was the first of the family to perish, even before we were deported. My mother's second brother, Karel Alter, was president of the Czech Council of Jewish Communities during the Protectorate, was a doctor of law and had two sons ? Bedrich and Pavel. Another of my mother's brothers, Bedrich Alter, fell during World War I. My mother's sister, Marie, married Karel Kraus from Caslav.