

The Polak Family In Jicin



This is a picture of the Polak family from Jicin. Sitting at the far right is my grandmother, Helena Polakova [nee Alterova], and standing above her is my grandfather, Hynek Polak. Then sitting on the left is my father, Emil Polak, standing beside him is his sister Hedvika, and in the middle is his brother Bedrich Polak. The photo was apparently taken in 1901. My grandfather on my father's side, Hynek Polak, was born in 1860 in Jicin. He graduated from business academy and devoted his entire life to business; he and Grandma owned a shop where they sold liquor. His son, Bedrich Polak, and his wife Greta also had a store in the same building in Jicin. His other son, my uncle Josef, had a daughter Hana, who died in the Holocaust, and Vera, who survived the war. We used to

go to Jicin to visit my grandparents, but I don't remember it that much, I was still very small. My grandparents were believers, but observed Jewish holidays more out of tradition, as some sort of folklore. They practiced, but we never really talked about it much. I do know that my father used to go to the synagogue, because it was necessary for ten adult men to meet, meaning men that had had their bar mitzvah, so that they could have a minyan for prayer. My grandmother, Helena Polakova, née Alterova, died in 1934. Grandpa Hynek spent the whole war in Terezin, luckily he had cataracts, and so always when he was supposed to go into the transport, he went for an operation and thus avoided deportation. This was because the Germans didn't deport sick people eastward, because they were still claiming that there were work camps in the east, and it would thus have been suspicious if they would've been sending the disabled and ill to work. It seems that the Germans were counting on him dying of disease in Terezin, as he was 85! But Grandpa survived all his children, most of his grandchildren, and died long after the war, at the age of 96.