

Jakub Bromberg's Family House In Bodzentyn



This is the Bromberg's family house. I took this photo during my trip to Bodzentyn after World War II, in 1957.

I was hiding first, after I arrived. I didn't want to say that I was a Jew, because I was afraid. I went to Bodzentyn, because I had a house there. I was thinking of getting it back, but I didn't. There was this old woman living there. I didn't want to move her, so I decided to leave the house alone. I came back to get the birth certificates, all the documents that everyone's dead, death certificates and all that.

We lived on Pasięka Street, next to Dolny Rynek, the Lower Market. This was the first street down, as you walked to Gorny Rynek, the Upper Market. It was called Pasięka, which is Polish for beehive, because there were bees there, flowers and the bees collected honey from those flowers; there were lots of bees. And when you walked down to the mill, there were fish ponds there and water mills. Our house was right next to the street. There was a hallway next to the entrance and two apartments with entrances from the hall. Our apartment was maybe a bit bigger than this room of mine [approx. 20 sqm] and so many people - nine of us - living there. Us, that is parents and seven children, we lived in the room downstairs.

There was a stove for cooking and for heating. And you'd use wood for heating, not coal. On Mondays peasants used to bring wood from the forest and sell it. Only rich Jews could afford it, the poor ones would have to buy branches. We were those poor ones. We later had saws, so we had to saw this wood ourselves. I remember, because I helped Father and my brothers. There was no electricity and you'd have to bring water from the well. The well was on Dolny Rynek. I had a so-called 'kuromyslo', a kind of wooden harness with wire hooks and I had to carry the water in that. And when you did the laundry, you'd carry it to the river for rinsing. There were machines that

Father worked on, a table where you had to get everything ready. There wasn't much furniture - a cupboard, a table, three beds - because we didn't have room for anything more. Three, four people slept in one bed and I always slept with Father. And there was a cradle; I had to rock my dear sister. There was a shop upstairs. A kosher butcher, shochet, lived above us.

Our house didn't have a yard. In fact, there was moisture from the back. On market days women would come from Gorny Rynek to our house and relieve themselves next to the wall. And somehow no one came up with the idea of fencing in this property, so others wouldn't be able to enter. The wall was moist all the time and this house was made of stones, not bricks, and stones also create moisture. So this is why you'd get ill with arthritis.