

Marketa Bernerova At Her Grandmother Hedviga Kohnstein's Place



This picture was taken in Brno in the garden of my grandmother Kohnstein, in the year 1938. On the right you can see my grandmother on my mother's side, Hedviga Kohnstein, nee Cohen. Opposite her sits my sister Marketa Bernerova, nee Hertzкова, and in the middle is her first husband Herbert Strauss. They were likely photographed by my father, Bedrich Hertzka.

My grandmother on my mother's side was Hedviga Cohen. She came from Germany; she was probably born in Potsdam in 1858. Grandmother was of German origin, therefore, her German was perfect but she never really mastered the Czech language in her new home. My grandpa on my mother's side wore average clothes that did not differ in any way from the conventional clothing of other men in the town. Obviously, back in those days, men wore suits in the streets and other public places. Grandma also wore the same type of clothing as other women in Brno. She never wore a wig, not even a scarf because she wasn't an Orthodox Jewish woman. She used to wear a hat, though, but probably not due to religious reasons. In those days, a hat was part of a fashionable outfit and was worn by women of any confession.

My sister's maiden name was Marketa Hertzková. She was born on 2nd January 1918 in Brno. She attended the same public school as I did, but she was two grades higher than me. I remember one teacher once saying that he taught 16 Jews out of 24 students in my sister's class and that he had never had such an intelligent class. Marketa continued her studies at a secondary grammar school and afterwards got enrolled in Vesna. After passing the apprentice and qualification exams, she became a professional tailor.