

Johana Goldberger



This is a picture of my grandmother Johana Goldberger in Luhacovice in 1935. In the photograph she's the first on the left. I don't know the other people.

Grandma Johana, née Deutelbaum, was born in Vítkovce, near Topolcany, as the youngest of her parents' twelve children. They were a large family, but only up until the Holocaust. In my mother's generation there were 46 or 48 cousins. Around three quarters of them didn't survive the war.

Grandma wore a wig. From what my mother told me, I know that her oldest son was very ill. Back then she swore that if he got well, she'd wear a wig. When I was a child, that wig seemed very tawdry to me. But Grandma was devout, so she kept her promise to God. She observed all the holidays. Every Friday evening she'd light candles, and she kept a kosher household. I even lived with her at one time. My brother got scarlet fever, and I got sent to stay with her. That was in 1935.

I lived with her in 1939 as well. I know that at that time German soldiers were marching through Topolcany. Grandma was afraid of the clumping underneath her windows, and sat by me on my bed and was all afraid that I'd wake up. I slept like a log. At that time, the German Wehrmacht was crossing Slovakia to Poland. On 1st September 1939, the war began. It was during that time. Grandma was teaching me handiwork, mainly knitting. Because she was a diabetic, she used saccharin instead of sugar. I didn't like that food.

I liked my grandma very much. I think that of all her grandchildren, I liked her the most. It's no wonder, the others didn't spend as much time with her as I did. She also used to come to our place to visit at least once a week. She'd usually come on Friday to bathe before Saturday, because we had a bathroom and she didn't. During the war she moved in with us. She and I slept together in the same room.