

The Weiner Family Shop



In this picture from 1923, our family is in front of our shop in Prague. Sitting in the carriage is my brother Pepik, I'm the little girl standing beside the carriage, and holding the carriage is our servant Helena. We had a servant, Helena, who was a "schlonzacka" which means that she was from somewhere by Ostrava, and spoke in their dialect – a little Czech, a little Polish. I remember that when there were elections, I asked Hela whom she'd voted for. She told me that she's a "schlonzacka" and so of course has to vote for the Communists! My parents had a general store where they sold various goods: fruit, vegetables, baked goods, butter, eggs, milk, coffee, tea, sugar, sometimes even chickens and geese. I didn't like being in the store too much, because I had to help! My parents rose early in the morning and would go to the market close to Narodni Trida [National Avenue] for vegetables, fruit, eggs and other goods. At the market, when they'd see our mother approaching, they'd say: "The countess is coming" because she used to root around in the goods. [The Czech word for countess is "hraběnka" while the expression for rooting or digging around is "hrabat."] The market was this big lot, and my parents used to run into various storekeepers there. The Novaks, greengrocers, were from Kvetuse, close to Nadejkov, where I'd lived for three years, so I would occasionally go with them during the holidays. During the time of the protectorate we had to close the store and move in to one room. Before that we we'd been living in the building where our store was, and we had a small apartment – one room, a kitchen, and a larger front hall. My father didn't want to live anywhere else other than the house where we had our store, so he'd be close to work.