

Artur Bloch.



This is a photograph of my father, Artur Bloch, when he was about 50 years old. My father was born in Uncin in the year 1880. From the age of 10 he rented in Prague, where he was attending academic high school. In Prague he later studied at and graduated from a German business academy. He subsequently left for Paris for two years, where he studied French and spent a year in England because of English. His first work experience was then with some shipping company in Hamburg. In 1909 my grandfather died, and so they called my father home. My grandfather owned three prospering factories, and had left instructions as to which of his children was to run them. My father got the largest one, the porcelain factory, with the caveat that he must pay out a dowry for all his unmarried sisters, which back then they all were, save for one. So he got into financial

difficulties and was forced to find a partner. His brother-in-law, Josef Freund, who had a pharmacy on the Old Town Square in Prague and made a lot of money, then invested into the factory, as well as his brother Hugo, who lived with his family in our building part of the year. My parents met in Teplice. They were married in 1915, and I think that they had a Jewish wedding. My mother admired my father very much, and always spoke of him as a very honorable and decent person. Later, when I was old enough to understand, she explained to me why it couldn't work between them. Their personalities were too different, my father was a loner and my mother was on the contrary a social being. My father educated himself a lot his whole life, but no one ever knew how much he actually knew. He was very much an introvert, the same as my sister. The Blochs and Brumls were actually very different families in terms of character. The Blochs were in general more reserved, a person had to know them well to understand them. The Brumls were smiling, open and always cracking jokes, and even though they were sometimes badly off, no one ever realized it. My father was as a matter of principle against all associations. He made one exception and became a volunteer fireman, because he considered this group to be useful. I don't think that he ever actually helped with a fire, he really just took care of their accounting and administration, and probably also contributed financially. But otherwise he didn't approve of any associations or parties. Surprisingly for a factory owner, he voted for the Social Democrats. My father associated most often with his relatives, but what he liked the most was to spend time with his closest family, and as far as possible in such a manner so that he wouldn't have to talk much. He was a downright introvert. His big hobby was collecting old clocks. He read German, English and French. He studied Czech, but didn't do very well at it.