

The Bloch Family



Here from the left is my father, Artur Bloch, and his second wife Gusti, then my sister Hannerle, I, and standing on the right is my cousin Alfred, Aunt Adela's son. The photo was taken in the 1930s in the garden at our house in Dubi; there we actually lived right in the forest.

My sister was born in 1916 in Teplice. We called her Hanne, but her real name was Hannerle. My mother's brother Jan picked this name from the book 'Die Geschichte von der Hannerl und ihren Liebhabern' ['The Story of Hannerl and Her Lovers']. My uncle knew that my mother was pregnant, but he never saw my sister, because he fought and fell at the Italian Front. In a letter to my mother he wrote that he'd read that book and that Hannerle was a nice name, for them to give it to her.

My parents were divorced in 1929. My mother then married Dr. Viktor Hahn. During the divorce my parents came to an agreement, that my almost six year older sister would stay with our mother, and that I'd go live with my father. When I was already around 19, I asked my mother why I, as the younger one, had gone to be with my father, when at that time I hadn't even been eight years old. And my mother explained to me that she hadn't wanted to hurt my father even more, because she knew that if my sister had lived with him, they would have both withdrawn into themselves and would have become disaccustomed to talking. Each of them would have his book and his records with music and they wouldn't need to communicate with each other. So I remained with my father in Dubi, and my sister lived with our mother in Teplice with 'Uncle' Viktor.

My father also remarried. His second wife was named Augusta, born Diehlova in 1894. She had converted to Judaism when she had married her first husband, Mr. Neumann, who however died. He was a member of the B'nai B'rith Society, where there was this custom that upon a member's death, one of the others would be designated as the widow's guardian. And by coincidence her guardian became Josef Freund, who was the husband of my father's youngest sister, Marketa. And this Mr. Freund realized that he had a divorced brother-in-law in Dubi, who should probably get married, when he's raising a little daughter. There used to be a sanatorium in Dubi, which is around

to this day, Tereza's Spa, which used to rent out rooms when there weren't enough patients. And so Augusta arrived there for a week to inconspicuously check things out.

My 'aunt' was a very merry creature, and I liked her very much, and she also looked upon me as a daughter. She didn't have children of her own, her first husband had been almost 20 years older, and I guess they hadn't been able to have them. She got along better with my father than my mother had. Although she and my mother were both the same age, it was as if each one was from a different century. And 'auntie' from the century in which in short everything was done so that the husband would like it, so it wouldn't burden him and so he wouldn't have any worries. While our mother was from the century where more equal partnerships already existed. When my father and auntie were married, I had only one condition: that I won't have to call her Mom. So for me she was Aunt Gusti.