

My Mother On A Visit



This picture was probably taken in the 1930s in Trnava. My mother, Alzbeta Urban, is in the center. I don't know who the older people beside her are. I'm assuming that they're someone from her family in Trnava.

My mother's parents [Alzbeta Urban, née Grünfeld] lived in Trnava. My grandfather was named Bernat Grünfeld. He was a tall, strong man. He wore a mustache that had a bit of a curl. I don't remember my grandma's name. They were both deported. First they were in the collection camp in Zilina, and from there they took them to Poland. They killed them in Majdanek.

My grandfather owned a pub. It was called 'Zeleny strom' [The Green Tree]. To this day, there's still a pub in that location in Trnava. The pub was by a sugar refinery, and served as a ""travelers' inn"". It was mainly for the coachmen who used to bring sugarbeet to the refinery. They'd also bring it from Rakovice, where my uncle Erno Lichtenstein was the superintendent. Because the coachmen came from far away and couldn't return the same day, they'd stay there. They also had a water trough for the horses in the courtyard. It was all at their disposal. They also cooked at the pub. The food wasn't kosher. They cooked for everyone. It as a very nice, clean inn. On the counter, beside the beer taps, stood a beautiful, shiny cash register. It would ring when it opened. Beside the register were pretzels on a stick. They cost 10, maybe 15 hellers [in 1929 it was decreed by law that one Czechoslovak crown (Kc) – 1 Kc = 100 hellers, was equal in value to 44.58 mg of gold – Editor's note], and when they were making change, the guests would get a pretzel instead of those few hellers. As kids, we'd always come and take those pretzels. I also remember that once, right before Christmas, some carolers came to Grandpa's pub. They were wearing masks. It was very nice. They sang carols, and also put on performances. That was the first time I'd seen anything like that in my life. Then my grandfather gave them gifts, and they went on. We didn't ever stay too long in Trnava. When we did go there, it was only for the day. We'd eat something, my parents would talk a bit with our relatives, and right away we'd go back home again. It was a question of several hours. I don't even remember how my grandparents lived, how their house was furnished.