

## Chapter 2

### 1919-1937

#### 1919

28 May 1919 was my wedding day. I married František Rychlík of No. 105, the son of František Rychlík and of Helena, born Kaňová, from Moutnice. According to the church register we were not related, but perhaps our ancestors had come from the same family. My husband was born on 2 December 1889, and from his parents he received the house at No. 105 and a one-measure field. He had learnt ironworking. From my own parents, I received a seven-measure field. We declared the house and fields to be in joint ownership

My man, whom we all called Franta, was still fighting in Slovakia. After October 28, the Slovaks were still fighting against the Hungarians, who did not want to concede rule over Slovakia, and he went there as a volunteer. He received two days' leave for the wedding, and then had to go back. He finally came home on 11 October 1919. After his return, he took up the post of head smith on the manor estate here in Těšany, which since 1881 had been the property of the German family Veiss. The salary was 200 crowns monthly plus payment in kind, namely 12 cents of hard corn, 5 cents of barley, 3 cents of tailings for poultry, 24 cents of hard coal, 6 cubic metres of wood, and 24 litres of paraffin per year, and also a one-and-a-half measure field of potatoes and two litres of milk daily. In addition, those who did not occupy an estate flat received 350 crowns quarterly.

In 1919 there were local elections, and the first village mayor after the war was our neighbour Alois Dostal of No. 104.

#### 1920

In the spring of this year we did some rebuilding work on No. 105, and created a living-room for my man's parents. Franta's father was a cobbler, and still practised his trade. Besides Franta, he had four more sons and a daughter, but all had grown up and left home. Back at No. 100, Tonda was now trained and was working in the garden of the Alžbětinkan monastery in Brno, from where he went after a year to Prague for further experience. Pavel, the third of the boys, was learning tailoring with Antonín Svoboda at No. 80.

#### 1921-22

Towards the end of 1921, Franta's father fell seriously ill, and he died on 6 January 1922 at the age of 60.

In 1922, there was a selling-off of scattered pieces of land from the manor estate. One portion involved the meadow which was on the other side of the brook at the end of our garden. This was divided up, and was attached to the gardens opposite. Our share at No. 105 was 11 ares, for which we paid 3,000 crowns. At No. 100 they added two portions, that at the end of their own garden and that opposite their neighbour Antonie Bartušková at No. 102, who did not have the money to pay for her share. These portions were larger, and cost 3,500 crowns each. Another selling-off involved a meadow in the part of the village designated for building, on which a row of houses was constructed (Mill Street).

#### 1924

In 1924, after the harvest, there was a further land reform in our village, and much more of the meadowland on the manor estate was sold off. A hundred-measure meadow below Šaracký Dvůr went to a Russian legionary from Žatčany, but most were divided into pieces of four or five measures and sold at from 400 to 1,000 crowns per measure according to the quality of the soil. A residual estate with 500 measures of land was created from Šaracký Dvůr, and was bought by Otakar Brauner, the former manor estate manager. The manor estate itself retained 2,100 measures, together with the Šinkvice Dvůr estate.

My man received a three-and-a-half measure field in part of the meadowland as a severance payment on discharge from work, together with a supplement of 1,400 crowns. From this year 1924, he ceased working as a smith, and devoted himself to the land. From the second distribution of estate land, we

took four measures for 4,000 crowns.

Antonín came back from Prague, and took over the extensions to the garden of No. 100 which had been bought in the 1922 distribution. Father leased the “bull stud”. As the breeder, he had to buy the four bulls himself, but the village gave him an eighteen-measure field for their upkeep and he received thirteen crowns for each cow or heifer serviced. He built stalls for these bulls in the barn, with free access to an enclosure in the yard. Now, however, cows were not enough for the tilling of so many fields (50 measures in all), and so he took one army horse on hire purchase and bought a second. Pavel, who had learned tailoring and was working as a journeyman tailor, gave up his trade and came home to work with the horses. František was learning carpentry in Bošovice.

[According to Vermouzek, the establishment of this bull stud was a village initiative, and the office of breeder was put out to tender by public auction. The village also obtained a boar and a billygoat, but presumably somebody else tendered for these.]

## 1926-27

In 1926, Tonda bought himself a device called “Artificial Rain”, driven by a petrol engine, for watering the garden. The device and the engine together cost 15,000 crowns. The same year, father built a barn near the cemetery, which received the number 247. 1926 and 1927 were both good years for crops. The price of wheat was 180–190 crowns per metric cent, rye similarly. Barley 170–180 crowns, oats 150 crowns, potatoes 35–45 crowns, beet 17.50 crowns.

My parents were doing well, they were growing plenty of corn and beet, and Tonda was likewise taking in plenty from the garden. Father was considering building a new house. He wanted to give No. 100, with its garden, to Tonda, and to build himself somewhere new. They collected building materials at the building site on the road to Moutnice.

In 1926, father bought a new threshing machine, in which the threshed grain dropped directly into sacks. To drive it, he used the petrol motor which Tonda had bought for the garden, since this needed less watering after the harvest. He threshed other people’s grain as well as his own, at a price of 26 crowns per hour.

In 1927, they took 500 cents of beet to the sugar factory at Sokolnice, and brought back 300 beet cuttings.

After the 1927 harvest, they started putting up electric power lines. [The text lists the sectors crossed, and it would seem that the line went roughly from west to east, a kilometre or so to the north of the village where the 22kV line still goes. There are now feeder lines in to the village and out to Šinkvický Dvůr, and presumably there were similar lines right from the start.]

On October 11, Tobiáš married Marie Petláková of No. 56. Josef was learning milling at the local mill, run by Josef Rybář at No. 1. Our parents’ maid, Marie Šťastná from Čejkovice, received a monthly wage of 100 crowns.

In the autumn of 1927, there were elections for the local council. It was contested by eight parties, thus (1) National Socialist Party (three seats gained), (2) United Front of Workers and Farmworkers (Communists) (no seats), (3) Citizens’ Party (Kusý, No. 117) (two seats), (4) Manor Estate Employees (three seats), (5) People’s Party (three seats), (6) Republicans (Agrarians) (two seats), (7) Homeland (two seats), (8) People’s Party Group (Martin Turek, No. 39) (three seats). Jos Vahala (No. 166) was elected as mayor, Josef Dosoudil (No. 121) as deputy, and Martin Turek (No. 39), Vilém Kusý (No. 117), Šimon Nehyba (No. 183), and Frant. Příbyl (No. 4) as committee members. The outgoing mayor, Tobiáš Štěpánek of No. 195, who had been elected in 1923, handed over to his successor Josef Vahala on 1 January 1928.

[Vermouzek explains some of the party affiliations. Some parties, he says, were ideologically based, others represented particular interests. Pre-eminent among the latter were the manor estate employees, there because the lord of the manor wanted his own representatives on the council even though as the largest ratepayer he was invited to its meetings. For the rest, the socialists and the communists seem to have been very much what their names would imply today, the “people’s party” was the Catholic party and had split into two groups, the “agrarians” were the party of the wealthy land-holders, and the homeland party was an offshoot representing the smallholders. He says that it was interesting that the agrarians gained only two seats in a clearly agricultural community, but the majority of those who worked on the land voted for the people’s party. It also appears that the mayor and the other officials were elected by these eighteen, and he said it was interesting that the mayor came from the ranks of the homeland party even though it had only two seats, various other groups having joined with it to support him.]

## 1928

During the winter, the electrification of our village was completed, at a cost of 320,000 crowns, and on April 6 the current was switched on.

On February 18, at 4 o'clock in the evening, there was a wild windstorm, which blew down an estate shed in the yard at Šinkvice. The falling shed caught Jan Vahala of No. 97 and worker Jan Baláš. Jan Vahala was badly injured, and although he recovered he was a cripple for life.

On Friday April 20, at 7.30 in the evening, mother was milking a cow, which was in the stall beside the four bulls. Father appeared and started to pat and stroke the bull nearest to the wall, which was the largest of them at a weight of eight cents. The bull suddenly gored him, and flung him against the wall. Mother shrieked, and the maid, who was chopping wood on the barn floor, shouted to Tonda who was in the yard. He came running at once, and saw how the bull was crushing father's chest with its head. Tonda shouted at it and hit it with the bullwhip, and the animal snorted and drew back. Then he picked up father, who was unconscious, and carried him into the living room. There he laid him on the bed, and cut up his clothes so that they could undress him. When they had done this, they saw that he had a crushed rib cage. Jara ran for me, and when he told me what had happened I was horrified and ran back with him. Father was lying on the bed, pale and with his eyes closed, and as he breathed something rattled in his chest. At that time there was no doctor in Těšany, so I went to the post office to see if I could telephone for an ambulance. The officer there said no, it was not possible to telephone after 6 o'clock in the evening, but she advised me to go to the station at Sokolnice where it was possible to telephone even during the night. Pavel went there on his bicycle. Tonda and Doba leant over father and wiped his face, and asked him if he was lying comfortably or if they should lay him otherwise. But father weakly said no, leave him as he was, he knew he would die. Then he spoke no more. They sent for the priest to come and give the last rites. Before the Red Cross ambulance arrived at 10 o'clock, father was already with God. With the ambulance came a doctor, who carefully examined father and established that he had a crushed breastbone and broken ribs which had penetrated his lungs and heart, and that in addition he had wounds to his head. It was a sad night. The morning was even sadder. Mother had a mental collapse, and Dr Viederman had to be called from Újezd to give her a tranquillizing injection.

At 3 o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday April 22, there was a funeral such as Těšany had never seen. News of the tragic death had spread throughout the region, and had appeared in the newspapers. Father was known everywhere, and so on this Sunday, a lovely day, a great multitude of people came down. He left his home as its master, and he had been a good master.

Tonda, as the eldest of the boys, took over the running of the farm. Tobiáš was living with his wife at her father's, No. 56. They already had a son, Alois, at whose christening I had stood as godmother. Father had left no will, so we had to receive equal shares of his estate, but we all renounced our shares in favour of our mother and she then distributed them among her sons as father had always intended. Eldest brother Antonín received No. 100 and its garden immediately. Youngest brother Jaromír went to Brno in the spring to learn bricklaying.

The summer months of 1928 were dry. There was a good crop of corn, but hay and root crops were poor. After the harvest, a barn full of corn just harvested, belonging to Josef Chalupa of No. 23, burnt down. This was on the road next to Jaroslav Vahala's at No 223.

## 1929

The winter of 1928-29 was very cruel, with great falls of snow. In our garden, so much was heaped up that some trees were covered to halfway up the crown, and others could be seen only as hillocks in the snow. [There will be a similar reference in the winter of 1939-40, but in that case there is an explicit "by the ditch", and it would seem that in each case we are talking about deep drifts down by the brook which had marked the end of the garden before the 1922 addition.] On one of the roads out of the village there were drifts 5 or 6 metres high, and temperatures dropped to 30 degrees below zero. All transport was halted, and the post bus stayed at Těšany for six weeks before the service could resume. Nobody could remember such a winter. Wild animals survived only with difficulty, and half the fruit trees were cracked or blistered.

In the spring, the manor estate was leased out. Its previous owner, Mrs Leopoldyna Veiss, had died at the age of 87, and her heirs leased the estate to Edvin Eisner from Prague. Sowing this year started in the first half of April.

On April 29, our Antonín was married. His bride was Antonie Kolaříková from Nesvačilka.

Antonie was an orphan, having only a single brother Eduard. Because she had no parents, the wedding took place at our mother's at No. 100, where Tonča, as we called her, would be mistress. The house to which they took the building material while father was still alive was now built, and after completion of the internal work mother moved there with the remaining boys.

Even though sowing had been so late, crops were good. The damage that the winter had done to the fruit trees was now to be seen for the first time. All the trees which the frost had blistered were drying out.

But the year was a disaster for those who worked on the land. Corn prices tumbled. Wheat which the previous year had fetched 190–200 crowns now fell to 145–150, rye the same, barley from 180–190 crowns to 110–115, maize from 180 to 120. The price of fields was substantial. Tonda bought two measures from Štěpán Chaloupka of No. 109 for 14,000 crowns. This was very different from pre-war prices, when field prices per measure were 200–250 gold pieces, that is 400–500 crowns. However corn and everything else was much cheaper then. One cent (100 kg) of wheat cost 10–12 gold pieces, rye the same, barley 6–8. Beet was one gold piece per 100 kg, sugar 28 krejcar for 1 kg. A litre of beer cost 12 krejcar, a litre of wine 16 krejcar. One metre of buckram or coarse cotton cost 25–30 krejcar. Workers on the manor estate received 40–50 krejcar daily. Now 100 kg of beet was costing 17 crowns, 1 kg of sugar 6 crowns, a litre of beer 3 crowns, of wine 8–10 crowns, a metre of buckram or coarse cotton 5.50–6 crowns. Workers were receiving 8–10 crowns daily. As for livestock, a cow fetched 3,000–4,000–5,000 crowns, piglets 15–20–22 crowns per 1 kg.

Over Christmas, Tonda heard that the Žatčany miller, Josef Matýšek, was selling his mill. After discussion with Joška, who had learnt the trade, he decided that they would buy the mill jointly.

### 1930

In the first days of the new year, Tonda bought Josef Matýšek's mill for 260,000 crowns. It was put in the names of Tonda, his wife, and Joška in equal shares. Mother sold some fields and the new house, No. 267, to František Přibyl, and Tonda then sold the field which his wife had received near Nesvačilka. This gave them 160,000 crowns in ready money, which was enough since the remaining 100,000 were raised by mortgaging the mill itself. On January 10, Tonda's wife had a little daughter, who was christened Vlasta. Her godmother was our mother, who carried her granddaughter to the christening.

Winter this year was mild.

At the beginning of March, Tonda and his family, together with Joška, moved to the mill at Třebomyslice. [Žatčany and Třebomyslice were neighbouring hamlets which coalesced, and the writer uses sometimes one name and sometimes the other.] Jara immediately gave up learning to be a bricklayer and became a gardener.

During this year, the economic crisis started to make itself felt everywhere and in everything. Crops were good, but prices fell, and the same was true of livestock. Tonda in Žatčany-Třebomyslice was working at his new trade. There was plenty of corn to be ground, and he tried to do what people wanted. To help look after the baby, they took in our great-aunt Marie Králová, the sister of our late grandfather, who since 1927 had been living as a widow in the house where she had been born eighty years before. She had no children of her own. She and her husband Václav Král had been fifty years in service on the Martnice estate, so we called her "Auntie Martnická". After the death of her man, father had taken her in to attend to her until her own death, but God had willed otherwise. Mother looked after the farm with Pavel, and had great worries. In order not to sell more fields when buying the mill, she had borrowed 40,000 crowns from a savings bank in Klobouky. Tonda had surrendered the family home, No. 100, to Jara, who was now running it as a garden enterprise. František was a soldier, having been called up for eighteen months. Doba had moved to Měnin, where he was in charge of the estate smithy.

### 1931 (also a recapitulation of work done in 1929-30)

The economic crisis was continually getting worse. Workers were being thrown out of employment, and everywhere there was a shortage of money.

This year was very dry, especially in the summer months, and hay and fodder crops were very poor. Livestock prices fell, piglets 4–6 crowns for 1 kg, calves 4–5 crowns. Livestock for slaughter, cows and heifers 3–4–4.50 crowns per 1 kg live weight, pigs 4.50–5 crowns. Beet fell to 12.50 per 100 kg. Wheat was down to 130 crowns, rye was in very short supply and hence dearer at 140–150 crowns,

barley 90–100 crowns.

On June 15, mother's lease of the bull stud expired. The sale of the four bulls realised a total of 12,000 crowns, which immediately paid off the debt. Tonda at the mill had a son Květoslav, born on May 10.

In 1931, they started building a secondary school on the "hop-garden" plot bought for the purpose from the manor estate. [According to Vermouzek, this had been used for growing the hops when Těšany had its own brewery.] The land cost 9,500 crowns for 43 ares, and the building of the school, which was done by Frant. Zukal from Brno, cost 750,000 crowns.

Work was being done to make our village of Těšany into a market town which would hold annual general and livestock markets. Our latest mayor, Josef Vahala of No. 166, was trying to improve Těšany in a way that perhaps no previous mayor had done. At his instigation, the village green had been tidied up. It had previously been traversed by a brook, which in places, opposite the smithy and the school, had formed a deep ditch, and in other places was broad and shallow. This brook was channelled into a cement pipe one metre in diameter, and its whole course, from its start to its finish by the bridge, was covered with earth taken from the sunken track by the former vineyards, making this track substantially wider. Thus the ugly brook disappeared, and in its place came a beautifully level sward in which our little church shone white amidst the fresh green of the trees. This was done in 1929-30. Now, in 1931, cement footpaths were put around the houses, which contributed greatly to the convenience and appearance of the village.

Towards the end of 1931 I did not feel too well and went to Dr Rejnart in Újezd, and he said that I had a tumour and had to go to hospital for an operation. So I said goodbye to everyone, and on December 1 I was admitted to the chief maternity hospital by the corn market in Brno. The next day, December 2, they called me into the operating theatre. At 8.45 in the morning, I was lying on the operating table, and they gave me an anaesthetic. My eyes were bound, and someone stood over me and put something like a mask over my face. Then he told me to count 1, 2, 3. I counted to 10, and I felt that they were tying down my hands. I felt that I was suffocating and asked the man standing over me to free my face, but he impatiently told me to breathe in deeply and count quickly. I breathed in deeply and ceased to count, I felt as if I was falling into some deep chasm, and then nothing. At 12 o'clock they took me back to my bed still unconscious (so my neighbours told me). I recovered consciousness at 4.30 in the afternoon, the clock was on the opposite wall in front of me, and with consciousness came an awful pain. In the evening, the surgeon, Dr Maršálek, came and asked me, "How are you feeling? You had more tumours and one had reached your bladder, and I had to operate on your bladder as well." I stayed in hospital until December 22, when I was feeling better and wanted to go home. The nursing doctor was initially unwilling, but when I said that there was a local doctor who would look after me further, he agreed on condition that I signed a disclaimer saying that I was leaving hospital at my own risk.

During this year, we took in one of the daughters of my man's brother Pavel, who was married and lived in Boleradice [a village eight kilometres to the south-east]. His wife had died leaving him with four small children, one of whom, nine-year-old Anděla Rychlíková, was now with us.

### 1932-35

These were years of great economic crisis throughout the whole republic. A large number of workmen had no employment, and the state provided them with some assistance. The prices of farm produce continued to fall, and those who had taken expensive pieces of land on six-year leases (400–500 crowns per measure) could not keep up the payments and went into debt.

It was noticeable during these years that girls and young married women stopped wearing country dress, and substituted town clothes.

On 6 April 1932, František married Jenofefa Husáková from Nesvačilka. The wedding was held in Nesvačilka at the house of the bride's mother, her father having been killed during the war. They lived for half a year with mother at No. 100, and in the autumn bought No. 119 for 30,000 crowns from Petronyla Žáková from Moutnice.

During this time of crisis, the Těšany secondary school was being built. Now it was happily finished, and the opening ceremony took place on 4 September 1932. The ceremony was attended by many guests from the education ministry and by people from all the surrounding villages. The guests were welcomed, and the ceremony opened, by village mayor Josef Vahala of No. 166, who handed over to Jůlius Kopeček, a deputy in the national council in Brno. Then he spoke of the teacher in charge of our village school, Josef Chalupník, who by his influence had significantly contributed to the

building of the secondary school. Therefore Josef Chalupník was named as the new Těšany secondary school's first head.

In 1933-34, the crisis was perhaps at its worst. Pigs sold at 3–3.50 crowns per 1 kg live weight. Piglets were 3 crowns per 1 kg, and demand was very small. Cattle 2–3 crowns per 1 kg live weight, fat geese and ducks 8–10 crowns per 1 kg dead weight, chickens 12–16 crowns per pair. Wheat was at 75–80 crowns per 100 kg, barley 60–70 crowns. Sugar beet was sown in limited quantities, and if somebody came to the weighing machine with more than was in his contract he had to take the excess home, even if it was only a matter of two or three cents. 1 kg of butter cost 10–12–14 crowns according to quality, eggs were three for a crown, soap 4–6–8 crowns for 1 kg. Tract-holders paid people working for them 5 crowns per day plus breakfast and field lunch, and on the manor estate they had 8 crowns daily. The result of these miserable ratios was a proliferation of thieving of all kinds.

In 1933, the first vineyards started to be established, and we were among the first growers. We planted on the tract above the track, opposite Rotnágl's hill. Planting at the same time as ourselves were various neighbours, Frant Káňa of No. 98, Frant Horák of No. 41, Josef Vahala of No. 166, Jan Horák of No. 150, and Frant Dostal of No. 31. One vine seedling, grafted on to American rootstock, cost 1–1.20 crowns. [According to Vermouzek, vine-growing in Těšany had declined in the second half of the 19th century, and had ceased altogether at the end of the First World War. It was restarted at the instigation of Leopold Vahala, who appears to have been related to František Káňa and was shortly to move to No. 98 himself (we shall meet him several times in what follows). He had got friendly with a couple of growers from Čejkovice when in the army, and they had convinced him that vine-growing in Těšany could be made profitable. Names such as "Rotnágl's hill" tended to reflect contemporary ownership and this name does not appear on any map I have seen, but it was presumably one of the hills in the vineyards. There are further references to it on 18 April 1945 and in March 1974.]

This year, permission was granted for a quarterly livestock market, which would be held on the second Wednesday in March, June, September, and December. The first market was held on 13 March 1933 on a newly prepared marketplace opposite the cemetery. The preparation and enclosure of the marketplace cost 8,000 crowns. On the second Wednesday in June there was also a general market. Traders came with drapery, clothes, hats, crockery, toys made from metal, wood, and earthenware, and various other goods. Stallholders shouted and puffed their wares, and people came in great numbers from all around. These livestock and general markets were good for trade, and brought money into the village.

On 30 April 1934, a piece of iron fell on Doba in the smithy, and crushed three fingers of his right hand. In the hospital, they took off his index finger at the second knuckle, and cut the other two right back to the palm. He was left with just a thumb and a little finger. He spent some time in the hospital before his hand healed. He could no longer work as a smith, but would receive a pension from the accident insurance. My man took over his place at the Měnín smithy and was there until New Year 1935, when the manor estate found a new smith.

In the following years, there was a small improvement in the economic situation.

Tonda in Žatčany had a new addition to his family. A son was born on 13 September 1933, and was christened Josef. [He appears later under the nickname "Pepíček".] And a month later, on October 14, Pavel got married. His bride was Marie Lorencova from Třebomyslice, and the wedding took place from the house of Marie's mother. She had already lost her father. As a marriage portion, our mother gave Pavel a six-measure field and a newly built barn by the cemetery, which Pavel converted into a house. While this was being done, he and his bride lived with her at No. 100. The garden was being left unattended while Jara was on military service in northern Bohemia. On November 14, exactly a month after Pavel's wedding, Joška married Marie Lautrbachová from Žatčany. It was a grand wedding. Over a hundred people were invited, lunch was at the bride's house, and supper was at the mill. So, in 1933, mother saw two sons married. The boys departed one after the other within a short time, and a house which had been full of bustle and merriment fell quiet. Mother was sad, so she often took in Doba's Aloise or Tonda's Vlastička for a few days. Vlastička was very sharp and lively. Mother taught her to pray for her dead grandfather, and the little girl was very studious and liked to pray with grandma. But when mother reached "Let eternal light shine on him", she stopped repeating and said, "Granny, not eternal light, let him have electric light."

Thus the grandchildren brightened mother's life. In 1934, she had further grandchildren. Josef had a son Květoslav, Pavel a daughter Martička, and František a son František to go with his daughter Libuše. In 1934, Pavel made a house out of the barn, and behind it he built new cowsheds. This house had number 247, and at the beginning of September the young couple left No. 100 and moved in.

Josef, who had been operating the mill at Třebomyslice-Žatčany jointly with Tonda, also became independent. He bought the mill at Dubňany near Hodonín for 160,000 crowns at auction. This mill had been built as recently as 1928, and at the price was very cheap. Tonda paid him his share in the Žatčany mill, giving him 80,000 crowns, and when he added his bride's dowry the mill was almost paid for. Dubňany was a large village, with over 900 houses. It had lignite mines and a glassworks, the soil was very sandy, and in the Hodonín direction there were woods as far as the eye could see. In the opposite direction, towards Hovorany, the inhabitants had planted vineyards. We anticipated that at Dubňany, among typical Moravian Slovaks, Joška would get on well.

In this year 1935, there was a gathering of Catholics in Prague on the day of the Slav missionaries Cyril and Metoděj. On that day, Catholics descended on Prague from all corners of the republic. We from Těšany also took part in the gathering, and travelled by a special train from Brno. We arrived at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and lodged in a school in Školská Street. Thus was fulfilled my dearest wish, to see Prague, about which I had read so much and of which I knew so much. The same day after our arrival, I went to look at the time-honoured Staroměstské Náměstí [the Old Town Square]. The inhabitants were very willing to answer our questions. Then one gentleman kindly took me to the front of the Staroměstská Radnice [the Old Town Hall], and showed me the place in the Staroměstské Náměstí where the Bohemian lords had been executed. I stood in front of the marble plaque, on which the names of the 27 executed nobles were inscribed. I cannot possibly write down everything I was feeling at that moment. It seemed to me that I was standing in a holy place, on a spot hallowed by Czech blood spilt for our rights. It moved me so deeply that I would most willingly have knelt and kissed the ground on which I was standing. And tears ran from my eyes, in spite of all I could do to prevent them.

Then we went to the Castle, where a paid guide took us round and explained everything. The next day, in the morning, we went in procession through Prague to Strahov, where Pontifical Mass was celebrated. Then, in the afternoon, more sightseeing. First we went to Vyšehrad, and looked at the remains of the old castle and at the courtyard from which Horymíř is said to have jumped with his horse Šemík into the Vltava [this is a reference to a famous Czech legend]. Then to the Vyšehrad cemetery, to pray and to bow before the memorials to our great Czech men and women. But we could do this only briefly, because three days were not enough to look at even the most noteworthy of the monuments. Then we went to Olšany, then to look at churches, museums, the Valdštýnský Palace, Daliborky, Na Petřín, and in the evening to the National Theatre for a performance of the opera "The Bartered Bride". And after this, back home to Moravia.

In this year, Doba moved from Měnin to Těšany. He was receiving payments of 200 crowns from the accident insurance for his missing fingers [the text doesn't say how frequently]. To live in, he bought himself the cottage at No. 180 from Ondřej Hlaváček for 18,000 crowns. And Pavel had a son Jaromír to go with his daughter Marta.

## 1936

It must be said that this year was very good. Corn of all kinds, including maize, yielded well, and there was an abundance of wheat and hay. A corn monopoly was created, and prices were increasing. Wheat 130 crowns for 100 kg, rye 125 crowns, barley 130 crowns, maize 90–110 crowns, potatoes 18–25 crowns, sugar beet 12.50 crowns. Breeding cattle and beef cattle also increased in price. Cows fetched 2,000–4,000 crowns, calves 4–5 crowns per 1 kg, pigs for slaughter 6–8 crowns per 1 kg, piglets 9–14 crowns per 1 kg.

We gathered our grapes for the first time, and pressed the first bucket of wine from our new vines.

Our priest, the Rev Alois Vaněk, departed to become a consistory councillor at Moutnice. He had been at Těšany since 1918. On the first of August, the Rev Antonín Florian arrived to replace him. He was a native of Holubice. He had previously been a chaplain, and Těšany was his first posting as priest. He was a very good preacher, and many people who previously had had no time for the Church came to hear his sermons. And he was a patriot, a fierce patriot, who brought his native land into every sermon. We all wished in our hearts that he would feel at home in Těšany and that he would like being among us.

A triangulation point was set up at the highest point in the vineyards. This was a wooden pyramid made from six-metre beams, painted black and white, and visible from many kilometres away. Similar triangulation points were later set up on all the local summits.

This year, God blessed our work, and opened His bountiful hand on our countryside. We had beautiful corn of all kinds, healthy potatoes (in the preceding years a third of the potatoes had been dug

up shrivelled like mushrooms), maize, fodder crops, and beet. The harvest started in the first half of July. The weather was very favourable, and by the end of July we were ready for threshing. The corn was taken to the new marketplace opposite the cemetery, where there were three threshing machines. One was owned by the savings bank "Reiffeisenka", the second by Jan Hájek of No. 241, and the third by Jan Horák of No. 8. All three were driven by electricity. We went to the first, which was the most modern. It bound the straw directly into bales, and consequently needed fewer people to operate.

By July 30 we had got everything reaped and threshed, and I went to Žatčany with the corn. I arrived at the mill at around 10 o'clock. The door leading to the living quarters was open, and in front of it was a crowd of children. Inside was the sound of agitated voices and crying. I stopped the cow, gave her a bunch of hay, and ran inside. In the hall opposite me, Tonda's wife Tonča ran out, fell against the wall with a heart-rending cry, and tore her hair as if she had lost her reason. I ran into the yard, and there on a table lay Tonda's three-year-old son Pepíček. He was not breathing, and their mill assistant Jan Řihánek was giving him artificial respiration. To my question as to what had happened, they told me that in a moment when he was not being watched, Pepíček had wandered into the garden, and had drowned in the mill-pool. Tonda, in the hope of bringing the child back to life, had gone to Újezd on his motorbike for the doctor. About five minutes after I arrived, Tonda came back, and the doctor drove up in a car just behind him. The doctor set to work and tried by every possible means to save the child, but all his efforts had no result. Finally he announced that everything was in vain, the child was dead. Oh, how crushing were those words from the doctor, "He is dead," and how much pain and how many tears followed them. So suddenly were shut off the shining black eyes of the strong and healthy Pepíček.

### 1937

On September 14, sad news spread throughout our republic. Father Masaryk, president and liberator, had died. Everywhere, black flags expressed the sorrow of the nation over a great son of his country, and bells tolled the knell from every tower. He went out into the realms beyond recall, to the weeping of a grateful nation. A good son of Moravia and a most distinguished man, who always and everywhere had the welfare of his people in mind.

Grant him gentle rest, O Lord, in the cemetery at Lány.

On November 16, mother's youngest son Jara married Josefka Novotná, daughter of Štěpán Novotný and Františka Novotná of No. 47. Now there would be a new mistress at No. 100. Jara, after his return from military service, resumed the garden, which had been neglected for two years while he was away.