

This work is a historic-sociological study of middle class women and families during the 19th and 20th centuries, as applies to the life of Antonie Kučerová, née Novopacká. The estate of Antonie Novopacká, period magazines and primary and secondary literature were used as a basis for this work.

From a young age girls were brought up to fulfil the role of wives and housewives and consequently their chief goal in life was to have a family. The status of wife was very important at that time. The situation of single women in society was complicated. Having children was an important attribute of married life, but young women were not prepared for this role at all, in comparison to young men, who it was assumed would have had some sexual experience. Little importance was placed on affection and sexuality in marriage during the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

During the 19th and 20th centuries families were dependent on the father, who fulfilled the role of provider and protector. If the father died the family frequently found life very difficult and consequently widows would try to find another partner in life. However, women were also an indispensable part of the family during this period, they took care of the day to day running of the household and naturally brought up the children, therefore if his wife died a widower would look for another wife, particularly if he had children.

During the 1870s the average married woman had approximately six to seven children, of which only three to four would survive to their fifteenth year as a result of high child mortality. At the beginning of the 20th century the number of children in families was fell and the number of infant and child deaths also fell thanks to improved medical care.

The individual chapters provide information about the life of Antonie Novopacká in an attempt to portray every day life in the middle classes.

Between 1870 and 1900 the lives of average middle class women changed primarily as a result of their approach to children, because the birth rate continued to fall towards the turn of the century and women consequently had more time for their children. A woman's relationship to her husband only changed in some families, but believe that no changes occurred in the family of Antonie Novopacká in spite of the fact that she experienced more love during her second marriage than she had with her first husband.