

Post Office In Opole Ghetto



This is a picture of the post office in Opole ghetto, Poland, which my father had taken by a local Jewish photographer in May 1941.

My parents, Wilhem and Johanna Schischa [nee Friedmann], were deported to Opole ghetto in Poland from Vienna on 26th February 1941. They were murdered a year later in either Belzec or Sobibor concentration camp.

I own a large number of letters, which my parents wrote to Aunt Fany, Aunt Berta and my grandmother from the ghetto before they were murdered. Aunt Berta gave me a little leather suitcase after the war which included all documents and letters she had collected before Aunt Fany and my grandmother were deported. That way all these valuable documents were preserved.

Apart from these letters, my father also sent photos from Opole ghetto. Opole was a village that had been sealed off. Jews who lived there weren't allowed to leave, and more and more Jews arrived. There were a bakery, a butcher's shop, a barber's shop, restaurants and a photo shop, just like in any normal village. However, nothing could be brought into the ghetto, so food soon became extremely expensive, and my parents' depended on help from their relatives in Vienna. It must have been very important to my father, to have life in the ghetto captured on film. The Jewish photographer took pictures of everything my father told him to capture on film. My father inscribed things on some of the pictures and sent them to Vienna.

In his letters to his relatives my father expressed both his thanks for all the parcels they sent to him and my mother, and his fear of an uncertain future. In a letter from 1st April 1941 he wrote:

?My dear ones,

Yesterday we received your 10th parcel. Contents: tin of sardines, dessert; the milk was confiscated. We truly appreciate your efforts. If it weren't for you, we would be in a bad way. I pay

1 zloty for regular parcels; cakes cost 4,80 zloty, so please don't send sweets any longer. Flour, bread, a bit of sugar, lemons, oranges, pasta and other small things are free. A spirit stove would be a real blessing, but a liter of spirit costs 7 to 8 zloty, so there's no way. 1 zloty is worth half a Reichsmark. We had doughnuts and long plaited buns made from all the flour you sent; what a delicacy that was! Yesterday we had a truly delicious meal as well, vegetable soup with noodles and farfelakh, made from the ingredients you sent. We preferred it to meat.?