

Julian Gringras



There's a photograph of me, as a two-year-old kid with our little dog Milka, holding the rocking horse. It was taken in my father's photographic studio 'Moderne.'

After six years in Switzerland my father, Koppel Gringras, came to Kielce; he probably had some money saved up.

To be a recognized craftsman you had to buy a license, I seem to remember. I suspect it was in around 1908, maybe 1909 or 1910 that the 'Moderne' photographic firm was opened, and it soon

began to grow.

The studio was on the main street, Kolejowa. We lived in the same building. The entrance to the studio was opposite our apartment, which was through the courtyard, on the mezzanine floor.

The photographic studio was built in the courtyard, a very light construction. Frosted windows, a glass roof, and frosted window panes shaded from the inside with short, dark blue curtains that you pulled across with a pole to get the right amount of light for a photograph.

On one side the whole wall was glass. When it hailed heavily, hailstones the size of chicken's eggs, it shattered good and proper.

The studio had a two-story stone annex. You went up wooden steps, quite steep, to the upper floor, and that was the laboratory.

There was a machine for making enlargements, that was where the photographs were developed, enlarged, trimmed, etc.

There was usually another person working there - one, two or three people worked there.

As far as I remember the principal employee was my cousin, my mother's sister's son Moric Chitler.

There was a cashier too - in front of the entrance to the studio there was a little room where the cash desk was and orders were taken.

Customers would come, place their orders, and then go through into the studio and there the photographs were taken.

It was usually Father who took the photographs, until his last years, until the 1930s, and then later Artur and my younger brothers took the photographs. And of course there were props in the studio - columns and whatever.

Background to suit the customer. One of those props was this rocking horse.