

Jakob Kraus In Front Of His Hairdressing Salon



This is my grandfather, Jakob Kraus, in front of his hairdressing salon. Beside my grandfather, who is supported by a cane, is my school friend Romek Turchan and a barber's apprentice next to him. I don't know the name of the apprentice. The photo was taken in Cracow in 1936.

My grandfather on my mother's side from Wieliczka came from a large and wealthy family. He was born in 1869. My grandfather's parents ran a restaurant in Rajska near Cracow. After their death, my grandfather sold the establishment and lost a lot of money that way. That was immediately after the war, before marks were replaced by zloty. The marks, which my grandfather received as payment, lost all of its value overnight.

In the 1880s my grandfather opened a hairdressing salon in Cracow, in the Podgorze district. Several apprentices worked in the salon as well as my grandfather. They learned the trade at his

salon and later left to start their own businesses. The apprentices would change every three years. It was a unisex salon. My grandfather had many customers. A cut cost one zloty.

My grandfather was also a feldsher. He applied leeches, pulled teeth and applied cupping glasses. The leeches would always be in a jar standing in the window of the hairdressing salon. My grandfather would get them from Budapest, Hungary. They would arrive once a week, through the mail. They were special leeches - medicinal; regular leeches could harm a human, bite in too deeply, but these would only break the skin and suck the blood. You put them behind the ear, on the mouth, on the gums.