

Jakob Kraus In Front Of His Hairdressing Salon



This is my maternal grandfather, Jakob Kraus. He is sitting in front of his hairdresser salon. The photo was taken in Cracow in 1920s.

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.

My grandparents' house was kosher. People cared about that at that time. There were those who respected the rules, but there were also those who didn't. In my family my grandmother and grandfather respected them. They only bought things which you were allowed to buy and which you should, but their sons and daughters didn't. My grandparents kept up what they were brought up in, but the young generation didn't have time to live like they did. But when they visited my grandparents for the holidays, they behaved properly - according to tradition.