

Josef Seweryn With His Mother Dora Seweryn And His Nursemaid



This is me with my mother, Dora Seweryn (nee Kraus), and my Polish nursemaid. I don't remember the name of the nursemaid. The photo was taken at the Secesya studio in Cracow in 1917.

I was born on 24th June 1917. My mother had no milk, so I had a wet-nurse - it was our neighbor, Mrs. Rokoszowa. I was friends with her son Tadek, who was my milk brother, throughout childhood.

When I was a few years old my mother left us. She met some Pole - Wladyslaw Seweryn and married him. When she left I walked her with my grandparents to the tram stop. I stayed behind as she didn't take me with her. She later changed her name to Elzbieta. Her husband worked on construction sites, she had a stall on the Maly Rynek market square. He didn't want to keep in touch with our family. They had children, but I never met them.

I grew up with my grandparents, Jakob and Felicja Kraus. My grandparents didn't have much time - they had their problems and their own affairs. I helped my grandfather in the shop. I remember he used to say, 'Do this, do that, wash the floor, clean up.' But my grandmother she had a gentler, caring approach, 'Come and have some dinner, have some lunch and breakfast.' My mother used to visit us sometimes.

We lived on 11 Limanowskiego Street, in a tenement house belonging to Mr. Brajer, who was of German origin. There were both Poles and Jews living in that house. It was a large building; there were two wings on both sides. Our apartment was in the back, on the first floor, and my grandfather's hairdressing salon was on the ground floor, with an entrance from the street. My grandmother didn't have a separate office for her real estate business. Customers would call her, my grandmother had a telephone and she took care of her business in the city.

There were three rooms in our apartment. My grandmother and grandfather slept in one of them; I slept in the second one and the housekeeper in the third. The housekeeper was Polish. When I was small, I also had a nanny. I don't remember her name.