

Irena Wygodzka With Her Family In Zakopane



This is a picture of my family. It was taken on holiday in Zakopane in the 1930s.

We are standing on some stairs, the youngest one in the family, my sister Jadzia, is standing at the bottom, then my other younger sister Zosia, I am the third from the bottom, then there's my brother Natan, my mother and my father at the top of the stairs.

Almost every year we'd go on vacation. We'd leave the city for at least a month, or two. We'd take all our stuff. We'd go near Katowice, to Bystra, to Cyganski Las, sometimes to Rabka, always to southern Poland, Silesia.

I never went to the seaside before the war. Our more distant family would go with us, too, and we'd spend time there together. We'd rent cottages from peasants.

I remember this hotel in Zakopane. We'd live there and eat there. It was a Jewish hotel. The owners were Jewish, the guests were mostly Jewish too.

We met a young married couple during one of those vacations, they were staying in that hotel with us. And then we hiked in the mountains together.

We'd hike mostly in the valleys with the little sisters, we'd climb the Gubalowka, never too high. We were not professional hikers, I didn't have any special clothing, I hiked in my school coat.

They loved each other, Father and Mother, yes, I remember this. They were very gentle with each other. But Mother felt that Father wasn't energetic enough with us, or with the work he was doing. Mother was always worried that she didn't have enough money.

As I remember it, it wasn't so bad, because we used to go on holidays in the summer with our entire family, there was a piano in the house, I used to learn how to play it.

That didn't last long, because I was lazy and didn't have good musical hearing. But I remember that my parents always talked about being in debt. Father used to borrow money, possibly from his brothers Tobiasz and Chaim.