

Sophie Ratz With Her Children Martin And Hedwig Charlotte



This is a picture of my mother-in-law Sophie Ratz and her children, my husband Martin Ratz, and his sister, Hedwig Charlotte Reissler, nee Ratz. The photo was taken in Cracow in 1928.

Martin was born on 14th April 1921 in Vienna. He had a sister called Hedwig Charlotte, born in Vienna in 1924. His father's name was Alexander and his mother was called Sophie. They came to Vienna from Brody, Galicia, but I don't remember when. I assume his father was a businessman. He worked in a company in Vienna that sold pencils and the like Two years later the family moved to Cracow. I suppose my husband's father had relatives and better job opportunities there. Unfortunately he died of a heart attack in 1931 or 32.

Sophie stayed in Cracow and devoted herself to the children. I don't know how they made a living, perhaps they had some income from some property or perhaps their relatives supported them. When my husband was in grammar school, his mother decided to send him to her sister in Vienna, probably because - but this is only my supposition - he had the chance of getting better final exams there than in Cracow. Martin moved to his aunt's in Vienna - she lived on Rechte Wienzeile - in 1937. In 1938, a year before his final exams, he was expelled from Austria for being a Polish Jew.

Hedy, as my husband's sister was called, lived with her future husband, Heinrich Reissler, a Holocaust survivor, who came from a very Orthodox family. They shared a two-bedroom apartment with friends who had also survived. Hedy and Heinrich immigrated to Palestine in 1946. We would have liked to put up Hedy because she was a typical war child, hadn't been able to finish school and we believed that she still needed support in many respects. She grew up in Cracow, but she was only a child when she lived there and couldn't really enjoy her teenage years. She never experienced this kind of world that was so important for my personal development. She is a typical example of how the war ruined the life of Jewish children.