

Irena Wygodzka At The Swimming-Pool In The Tatras



This picture was taken in 1938 in Zakopane. I am sitting beside the swimming pool, second from the right.

In summer 1938 I went to Zakopane only with my father. I don't know where the other members of our family were at that time. My father took this picture.

He really liked photography. He took pictures whenever he could. At outings, holidays, at home. He had a camera, he had a darkroom. It was some corner, maybe the servants' room. The camera - one of the more popular ones at the time, Zeiss or Leica.

There was this man, his name was Salpeter, he was going to Palestine as a tourist and he asked Father to lend him that camera. He was an acquaintance, from the same town. He had a store with ties, scarves and umbrellas. It was 1939.

Mr. Salpeter took that camera with him and stayed in Palestine. That's how my dad lost the camera. Father used to collect scissors of all types; there was this album where he, kind of, arranged these scissors.

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.