

Irena Wygodzka With Her Parents Herman And Bajla Beitner And Her Brother Natan Beitner



This is my family, the Beitners. My mother Bajla Beitner is sitting down and holding me, Irena Wygodzka.

My father, Herman Beitner is standing and has his arm on my brother's, Natan's, shoulder. This is a studio portrait taken while we were still living in Magdeburg, at atelier Dba Elmen, in the year 1923.

After the wedding my parents went to Magdeburg. There was a painful economic crisis in Poland and that's why Father went to Germany looking for work.

I think it must have been 1920. He worked at his sister's store. She had a shoe store. Her name was Ida Oppenheim, her husband, Natan Oppenheim, was, I think, a German Jew.

Or maybe he was from Poland? I don't know where they met, but I do know they only spoke German to each other. They were more progressive, reformed. We were both born in Magdeburg: my brother Natan and I.

Ida had two sons, Heinz and Herman, and two daughters, Cili und Mary. The Oppenheim family left Germany when Hitler came to power. They went to Palestine.

I later met Mary in Israel, she told me about how she took me for walks, I was in a stroller. One son, Heinz, lived in Germany after World War II, but both daughters and Herman lived in Israel. Cili had a hat store in Israel and sold hats to, for example, Golda Meir and other important people.

When I was two years old my parents returned to Poland. We went to Katowice. That's where my two sisters were born, Zosia and Jadzia. In Katowice, Father was a real estate manager. Private owners would ask him to manage their tenement houses.

Probably at first Father was only managing one or two houses, for example the building at 10 Slowackiego Street, which belonged to my father's brothers Tobiasz and Chaim.

Later the owners started trusting him more and all in all he had 14 buildings in his care.