

Lilli Tauber's Grandmother Sofie Friedmann With Her Grandchildren Eduard Schischa And Erika Sidon



This is a picture of my grandmother on my mother's side, Sofie Friedmann [nee Daniel], and her grandchildren Eduard Friedmann, my brother, and Erika Sidon [nee Friedmann], the daughter of my mother's oldest brother, Isidor Friedmann. The photo was taken in Prein in 1917, when my brother was three years old.

My grandmother came from Kobersdorf in Burgenland province. Her sister Adele was married to a certain Mr. Riegler, who owned a grocery. Our family often told the story: Mr. Riegler was brought to Edlach, the health resort where Theodor Herzl died in 1904, to wash Herzl's corpse because Riegler was the only Jew around.

My grandparents lived in Prein, a small health resort, on the foot of the Rax mountain. They had a beautiful house and a grocery shop. One could buy anything in this shop - which was usual in the country at that time. There were newspapers, tobacco, food, handkerchiefs, and there was also a small gas station attached to the shop.

My grandparents had six children: My mother, Johanna, Isidor, Julius, Fany, Berta and a son, who died of typhoid, I think at the age of 14. I don't remember his name. My grandfather died in 1900 at the age of 49. His children hadn't come of age yet and therefore needed a guardian. Uncle Riegler became their guardian.

My grandmother wasn't very old yet and still helped out in the shop after her husband's death. She stopped wearing a sheitl when she grew older. When I was five or six, she was very old and lived in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. Uncle Isi wasn't very religious and didn't lead a kosher life. She wouldn't have touched any of the food in the house, so my uncle regularly drove from Gloggnitz to Neunkirchen to get kosher meat for her. In the afternoon my grandmother went down to my uncle and aunt's place for coffee. The house was always bustling with activity, there were often visitors, and our whole family got together there, too. The house was extremely beautiful. It was torn down a little while ago. When I heard about this I felt miserable. I think I would have bought the house if I had had the money because to me it was more than just a house.

Uncle Isidor, who was just called Isi, took over my grandfather's house and shop in Prein. He was married to Josephine Katz. Isi and Josephine had two children: Erika and Erich. Erika married a fur dealer from Neunkirchen whose second name was Sidon. After the German invasion they illegally fled to Antwerp with their parents and headed further on to Palestine. They stayed in Israel. Erika had three daughters. She died comparatively young.

The house and shop in Prein were Aryanized in 1938. Sometimes there were people who tried to help my grandmother. The priest's cook, for instance, brought her fresh vegetables. However, there were also people who spit at my grandmother's feet; they were customers who had debts in my grandfather's shop.

My grandmother was deported to Theresienstadt ghetto at the age of 86 on 22nd July 1942 and died there on 29th November 1942.