

Freud Family

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The Great Native of Moravia: Dr. Sigmund Freud

Jiří Ošanec

Sigmund Freud, a scientist, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, the founder of psychoanalysis, was born in northern Moravia. It was on 6 May 1856 in Příbor, called Freiberg in German, then a small town of about five thousand.

Sigmund came into the world in a little house at 114 Zámečnická (Locksmith) Street (see photo), which his parents rented.

He was the son of the merchant Jakob Freud. Jakob, born 18 December 1815, was already 41 years old at Sigmund's birth, had been a widower, and his second wife Amalia Nathanson was younger by twenty years, born 18 August 1835. From his first marriage, he had two sons and was already a grandfather. Thus the little Sigmund became an uncle immediately at birth. His father Jakob took a position as official in a Fluss's textile factory, recently founded.

Not long after Sigmund was born, in 1857, his brother Julius was born, then in 1858 their sister Anna. But Julius, only eight months old, died. Sigmund experienced both the birth and the death very profoundly. Anna's birth record, as well as that of Sigmund, was entered in the Roman Catholic register of Příbor, but Julius' is not. (In addition to being recorded in their own vital registers, Jews had to be entered in Catholic parish registers until 1868.) More children were born into the Freud family in later years.

The Freuds were a typically Jewish patriarchal family, though not very orthodox. They spoke German

at home but most of the Příbor population was Czech. Sigmund had a Czech nanny from whom he learned to understand the Czech language. He loved her very much and was disappointed when she left her position after being accused of a theft. She led him to the Church and tried to implant the Catholic faith in him. Actually, the contrary was the result.

The sensitive boy perceived the meeting and clashes of the several cultures, languages, and religions from early infancy. He was impressed by the natural environment and his provincial home town. Judging by the importance he later attached to childhood in an individual's mental development, living in Příbor must have made a tremendous impact on him.

Freud's father Jakob was not very prosperous in Příbor and that is why the family, when Sigmund was not yet three, moved to Vienna. This was a profound shock for him.

The young Freud paid his native town a short visit when he was sixteen. It was during a vacation

before his graduation from high school and Sigmund was the guest of the family of Jewish manufacturer Fluss. He fell in love with Fluss's daughter, Gisela, at first sight. She was the sister of an early childhood friend of his. Nevertheless he did not declare his love to her.

The right love came several years later and her name was Martha Bernays. In the meantime he devoted himself to science which led to his famous discoveries.



Bust of Sigmund Freud by Vincenc Makovský, in Freud's native town of Příbor, Moravia. (Photo: Jiří Ošanec)



He never saw his native country again. Finally, after the 1938 German occupation he even had to leave Vienna. One year later, he died in London.

Příbor did not forget their native son. As early as 1931, when Freud celebrated his 75th birthday, one of his daughters attended the unveiling of a memorial tablet on the house where he was born. Sigmund Freud sent his thanks for this honor in a letter to the Příbor mayor. He appreciated the fact that he had been so honored at a time when the world was not yet united in positive appraisal of his work.

He wrote: "One thing about which I am sure: Deep in myself, under many layers, that happy infant of Příbor lives on; he received indelible impressions from that native town."

The memorial tablet was destroyed by the Nazis immediately after Příbor was annexed to the German

Empire in 1938. Although in postwar Czechoslovakia Freud's theories were not all accepted wholeheartedly, the famous native was again honored in Příbor.

In 1957 a new memorial tablet was unveiled on the house in which he was born and one of the Příbor streets was named after him. The simple memorial tablet was replaced by a new one in the year of the 30th anniversary of his death. Then a permanent exhibit was dedicated to Dr. Sigmund Freud in the local museum. Finally, a statue of Freud, the work of the well-known Czech sculptor Vincenc Makovský, has enriched Příbor (see photo). Today, the main square of the town is named after Freud.

When you come to the Czech Republic, do not forget to visit Freud's birthplace. Příbor is a lovely town in the Nový Jičín district, in an area from which many people emigrated, some of them to America.

Birth Record of Sigmund Freud

Name of child:	Sigismund [Freud]
Sex:	male
Birth status:	legitimate
Date of birth:	6 May 1856
Place of birth:	Příbor ("Frayberg") No. 117
Father:	Jakob Freud, merchant in Příbor, son of Solomon Freud, merchant, and Pepi née Hoffmann of Tysmenica ("Tysmanitz")
Mother:	Amalia, daughter of Jakob Nathanson, commercial traveller in Vienna ("Wien"), and Sara née Wilenz of Brody
Midwife:	Cecilie Smolková ("Cecilie Smolka") of Příbor ("Frayberg") No. 114
Religion:	Jewish
Date of Circumcision:	13 May (1856)
Circumcised by:	Samson Frankel of Ostrava ("Ostrau")
Witnesses:	Loise (?) Horowitz and Miss Mina, his sister, of Černovice ("Černowitz")

(Catholic birth records of Příbor, vol. 1827-1866 (Jews from 1839-1866 only), p. 7/314. Deposited at Zemský archív Opava, Inv. No. 1345 P-I-16.)

Comments: The record is written in German in the old script. The original German names are shown in quotes in parentheses in this translation. Freud changed his given name from *Sigismund* to *Sigmund* in 1878. Tysmenice, Brody, and Černovice are all in the Ukraine. At the time of Freud's birth the first two were in the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine, then part of Hungary, and the latter was in the Austrian province of Bukovina.

(Translation by Miroslav Koudelka)

Sources:

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Jones, Ernst. *Dan Leben und Werk von Sigmund Freud*, vol. I. (Bern - Stuttgart - Vienna, 1982).

Kučera, Otakar. "Dr. Sigmund Freud: Památník Příbor (Nový Jičín, 1969).

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