

## VON TRAPP FAMILY

### Life in Salzburg, Austria

#### Real Story of the von Trapp Family

Popular and decorated as a naval war commander in Austria, Captain Georg von Trapp married Agathe Whitehead in 1910. Both came from privileged families, so their lifestyle was opulent and comfortable even after the Captain lost his naval position following World War I. Since Austria no longer had a coast, von Trapp found that he no longer had a job. To make matters worse, he then lost his beloved wife. He was disconsolate and lost without both the mainstays of his life.



Maria was actually removed from the convent due to her own failing health rather than her difficulty in adapting to convent life. The doctor thought fresh air and exercise would help, so the decision was made to send her to the von Trapp home to be governess to one ill von Trapp daughter. Never to return to the convent, she married the Captain on November 26, 1927.

The real von Trapp children had different names than those used in the stage or film versions. They were; Maria, Rupert, Agathe, Werner, Hedwig, Johanna and Martina. (Rosmarie, Eleonore and Johannes were later children of Maria and Georg.) The death of their mother meant the seven children needed a governess. Many were hired but none stayed very long...until Maria.



Soprano Lotte Lehmann heard the family sing, and she suggested they perform at concerts. When the Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg heard them over the radio, he invited them to perform in Vienna.

Two more daughters were born and the von Trapps were content with their lives. In 1935, Father Wasner (/the-real-story/franz-wasner/) entered their lives. It was he who brought sophistication to their family hobby - music.

The natural freshness and purity of their voices awarded them the first prize in a choral competition during the Salzburg Festival in 1935. The family, who had lost all its money during the depression, was invited to give concerts throughout Europe.