

VON TRAPP FAMILY

Life in Salzburg, Austria

The Real Story the Trapp Family

Medical problems

The Von Trapps loved to hike and on one trip, they spent a night at a farmer's house. It was the next morning before he informed them that two of his daughters had scarlet fever. Unfortunately, Georg's children Maria, Johanna, and Martina all caught it. They all recovered, but Maria's case, due to lack of hydration, resulted in more serious issues.^[12] She began experiencing aches in her lower back and her doctor informed her that she had kidney stones and required an operation. Her stepmother Maria accompanied her to Vienna for the operation, which was a success. Nineteen stones were removed, but Maria's kidneys were a lifelong problem for her.

Maria Augusta Kutschera was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1905. She was orphaned as a young child and was raised as an atheist and socialist by an abusive relative. While attending the State Teachers' College of Progressive Education in Vienna, she accidentally attended a Palm Sunday service, believing it to be a concert of Bach music, where a priest was speaking. Years later she recalled in her autobiography *Maria*, "Now I had heard from my uncle that all of these Bible stories were inventions and old legends, and that there wasn't a word of truth in them. But the way this man talked just swept me off my feet. I was completely overwhelmed." Soon after, Maria graduated from college, and as a result of her religious awakening, she entered the Benedictine Abbey of Nonnberg in Salzburg as a novice. While she struggled with the unaccustomed rules and discipline, she considered that "These . . . two years were really necessary to get my twisted character and my overgrown self-will cut down to size."

However, her health suffered from not getting the exercise and fresh air to which she was accustomed. When Georg von Trapp approached the Reverend Mother of the Abbey seeking a teacher for his sick daughter, Maria was chosen, partly because of her training and skill as a teacher, but also because of concern for her health. She was supposed to remain with the von Trapps for 10 months, at the end of which she would formally enter the convent.

Maria tutored young Maria and developed a caring and loving relationship with all the children. She enjoyed singing with them and getting them involved in outdoor activities. During this time, Georg fell in love with Maria and asked her to stay with him and become a second mother to his children. Of his proposal, Maria said, "God must have made him word it that way because if he had only asked me to marry him I might not have said yes." Maria Kutschera and Georg von Trapp married in 1927. They had three children together: Rosmarie, 1929- ; Eleonore, 1931- ; and Johannes, 1939-.