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Sound familiar?...Think 'Sound of Music'!...Who hasn't seen that?! What a story!

Maria Augusta von Trapp (January 26, 1905 – March 28, 1987) was the matriarch of the Trapp Family Singers. Her story and that of her family's escape from the Nazis after the Anschluss was the inspiration for the musical *The Sound of Music*.

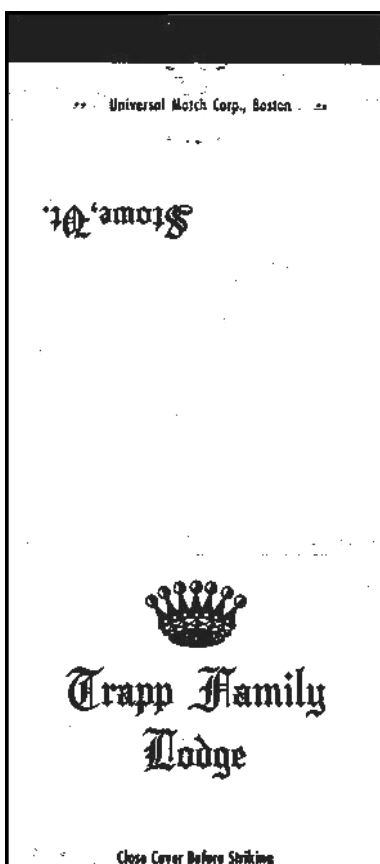
Maria Kutschera, born in Austria, had entered Nonnberg Abbey, a Benedictine (Roman Catholic) convent in Salzburg, intending to become a nun. While still a novice, she was asked to teach one of the seven children of widowed naval commander Georg Ritter von Trapp and his first wife, Agathe Whitehead von Trapp. Maria and Georg were married on November 26, 1927.

As Maria explains in her books, the Captain lost his fortune in 1935. Previously, it was safely invested in a bank in London. The Captain, to help Mrs. Lammer, a friend in the banking business, withdrew the money from the English bank and deposited it in Mrs. Lammer's bank, which promptly failed. Austria had been experiencing economic pressure as a result of German pressure and other factors.

To survive, the Trapps sent away most of their servants, moved into the top floor, and rented the empty rooms to students of the Catholic University. The Archbishop sent Father Wasner to stay with them as their chaplain, and the family began turning its love of music into a career. After performing at a festival in 1935, they became a popular touring act. Shortly after the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938, the family escaped to Italy and then to the United States. The family home became the headquarters of Heinrich Himmler. Calling themselves the Trapp Family Singers, the family, which by then included ten children, became famous in a new context and was soon touring the world. After the war, they founded the Trapp Family Austrian Relief, Inc., which sent hundreds of thousands of pounds of food and clothing to impoverished Austria. The Trapps made their home at a farm in Stowe, Vermont, where they founded a music camp. Georg von Trapp died of lung cancer on May 30, 1947.

Maria's book, *The Story of the Trapp Family Singers*, was a best-seller. It was made into two successful German/Austrian. The book was later adapted into *The Sound of Music*, a phenomenally successful Broadway musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, which resulted in an immensely popular US motion picture. However, because Maria had sold the rights for a sum less than \$10,000, the von Trapp family did not benefit greatly from the movie's enormous success. Maria wrote a sequel, "*A Family on Wheels*."

In 1957, the Trapp Family Singers disbanded and went their separate ways. Maria and three of her children became missionaries in the South Pacific. Maria later moved back to Vermont and managed the Trapp Family Lodge until her death in 1987 at the age of 82. Maria von Trapp, her husband Georg, and Hedwig von Trapp (1917–1972), the fifth child of Georg and Agathe von Trapp, are interred in the family cemetery at the Lodge. The Lodge is now managed by Georg and Maria's son,



Trapp Family

Johannes. It remains one of Vermont's most popular tourist destinations and also serves as one of the main concert sites for the Vermont Mozart Festival.

Four of the couple's great-grandchildren, all children of Stefan von Trapp, the son of Georg's son Werner, sing as the Von Trapp Children. Maria von Trapp's granddaughter, Elisabeth von Trapp, is a singer whose concerts are a mixture of Gregorian chant, musical comedy, country and contemporary folk.

Maria von Trapp made a cameo appearance in the movie version of *The Sound of Music*. For an instant she can be seen walking past an archway when Julie Andrews sings the song, "I Have Confidence". *[Everyone load your DVD and see if you can spot her!]*

The Trapp family first started welcoming guests to their 27-room lodge in the summer of 1950. Thirty-three years later the family opened its doors to a new 93-room resort with the same country charm of the original lodge. The Lodge continues to be owned and operated by the Trapp family.

What a success story!...And how fitting that the family settled in America. Today, the 2,400-acre resort with sweeping mountain views provides accommodations in an Austrian-style Main Lodge with an additional 23 new rooms and suites, and 100 Guest Houses (available on a time share basis). Talented chefs prepare European specialties in The Dining Room, The Lounge and the Austrian Tea Room, complemented by nightly entertainment. First-class facilities are available for meetings and weddings. Year-round recreational activities include cross-country skiing and hiking on over 100km of trails, tennis, croquet, snowshoeing, sleigh rides, children's programs, maple sugaring, workouts in the Fitness Center, music lessons, guided nature walks, swimming, An Afternoon with the Pastry Chef, and much more! *[Sounds like a great vacation idea to me]*

...Another example of history coming alive!

