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Peter N. Witt

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SKETCHES FROM MY MEMORY.
Volume 2.

Contents:

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Some Family History.

In tracing a family history, it is relatively easy to start with parents, grandparents and greatgrandparents, but the number of ancestors quickly becomes unmanageable even if records were complete. Consider that my father's family, the Witts, can be traced uninterruptedly in the male line to the middle of the fifteenth century, to 1465. Supposing four generations to a century, the primordial Witt is 20 generations back, i.e. he is one in 1,048,576 ancestors. Of course the true number is doubtless smaller; choice of marriage partner is constrained by social, geographic, economic, religious factors. Intermarriage complicates and prunes the genealogical tree.

Still, the number of ancestors must be very large. No wonder some simplification and selectivity occurs. The tradition that children bear the father's last name has made family history mainly a recording of males, or at least a tracing of a genealogical thread through male lines. Of course that makes the record of female ancestors difficult to recover, even if there were not other reasons why the history of women in the family is relatively neglected.

Women were not likely to have professions or public careers. Their letters, particularly if they were good writers, preserved something from which an impression of them as persons may be obtained, but otherwise the information is scant. Though the more I looked into my family the more I became interested in the women in the history, comparatively little can be discovered about them. In this account I will try to trace male and female lines, but after three or four generations, as will be seen, it became very much an account of male succession.

I have already mentioned the first records of my father's family. My mother's family, the Mendelssohns, are traceable, sometimes in the male, sometimes in the female line, to 1035. Though both sets of my ancestors lived in Central Europe, there are reasons (principally religious) to doubt that they ever met or became related.

I believe that despite the ever-changing combinations and joinings that human lineage entails, there is such a thing as attaining family identity and individuality. It may happen when perhaps one person in a generation performs deeds that are recorded and celebrated. If one becomes famous, powerful or rich, ancestors and descendants seem to share in his significance, and a record begins,- a family history begins.

A family may come to resemble a biological entity. It may be possible, for instance, to find an ageing process in its development. Family youth may last for one or two generations. In maturation families assume characteristic features, setting themselves off from other families; and soon afterwards, the signs of ageing are to be found, even in family members who are themselves young people. Sometimes it is possible to identify a very young individual as a member of an "old family". This progress from youth to old age, particularly the symptoms of ageing in "late" generations, can be discerned in the many written histories of families.

There are, I think, short-lived and long-lived families. Circcumstances permit ruling families like the Habsburgs, Bourbons and Hohenzollerns to cohere and remain distinct through many centuries. Other families died out or returned to obscurity in one or two generations. I consider the Witts a short-lived and the Mendelssohns a longer-lived family in the particular sense in which I am using the term.

I hope to make this conception clear in the following pages. I do not attempt to provide new insight into it, but I do hope to offer a compelling example.

Different religions often entail different ways of life. The history of the Mendelssohns is sprinkled with Jewish thinkers and rabbis back to the eleventh century. On the other hand, the Witts had been Protestant, (perhaps fiercely protestant), from the beginnings of the Reformation in Germany. A papal ban of 1518 specifically condemns a Witt for his opposition to a tax required to be submitted to Rome. His name was Detlef Witt,- interestingly my brother's name.

The Witts had moved East from Holland probably around the year 1,000; while the Mendelssohns, originally from Asia Minor, had lived in Southern France,- Troyes,- from a least the eleventh century.

Neither family was provincial either with regard to region or religion. Three generations before the time of my birth my Witt ancestor left Northern Germany and moved to Russia, where he married a Russian-German woman. One of their sons married a half-Spanish Catholic woman born in Cuba,- she became my grandmother. On the Mendelssohn side three generations back there came into the family a Catholic woman of Basque origin from Southern France, and in the next generation a Protestant woman from Berlin, who had come from West Germany.

Both families continued to cherish their original religious traditions, a matter that became important when Hitler began his polarization of the German population into desirable and undesirable groups.

My father, who I believe always regarded himself as a member of a Schleswig-Holstein Protestant farm family, was at the time of his death a non-practicing Catholic, as I learned to my surprise at that time. My mother was christened by the same Grunewald pastor who chistened and confirmed me; both her parents were life-long Protestants. The last observers of Jewish religion in her branch of the Mendelssohns were three of my great-great-grandparents. It is reported that when great-great-grandmother Marianne Mendelssohn nee Seeligmann was buried, her eight children and 35 grandchildren, who attended the funeral, were then for the first time at a Jewish ceremony.

Three of my fourteen great-great-grandparents (because of intermarriage I had two fewer than the usual sixteen) were Jewish, but none of my grandparents were. But as Albert Einstein once wrote, a Jew does not "cease to be a Jew" when he "becomes baptized and changes his name." After all my ancestry included the eleventh century Troyes Rabbi Schelomo ben Isaak, called Raschi, Biblical philosopher and commentator of the Talmud, and Moses Mendelssohn, the eighteenth century Berlin philosopher of the Enlightenment.

When in the mid-1930s Jews were being distinguished from non-Jews in Germany and the danger to Jews was becoming apparent, I felt strongly that I belonged to both sides, and under no circumstances did I belong to only one. The political and social climate of the time made it advisable for a few of my cousins to change their names (i.e. from Warschauer to Thevoz, from Salomonsohn to Solmssen, from Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to Winandt). To be both a German and a Jew- or of a family of Jewish lineage- was not easy. In the official political view, the two memberships were in conflict. Sometimes there were surprising resolutions of this forced dichotomy. I will illustrate one with the story of my former friend and second cousin Robi Warschauer.

The Warschauers had been a well-known Jewish banking family in East Prussia. On the other hand, Robi's mother - my beloved Tante Adele - came from a Geneva Calvinist family named Thevoz. My family's relationship with the Warschauers was close; I had been born in their garden house in Berlin, where my mother lived while my father was away in the First World War.

Though Robi was seven years older than I, we were much together as boys. He found in me as a ten-year-old someone who was willing to help him in the reconstruction of famous battles, and who was neither sufficiently interested nor sufficiently knowledgeable to contradict or cricize. From his earliest childhood he was passionately interested in military history. It seemed to me at that time that for any battle in any century, he knew the number of troops involved, how they had been deployed and moved, why one side had won and the other lost. His was the most one-track interest I have encountered in my whole life.

I do not remember now a single one of these battles, but I see in my mind's eye the large sandbox in which we recreated them. It was located in the "empty room", a large downstairs living room set aside for special activities such as those requiring that toys be left in place for some time. Our tin-soldier armies were moved according to historic records, and after days of diligent repositioning, we arrived at the historic outcome. For me it was a nice game; for him it was the most important activity in life, not violent or noisy, but a kind of spiritual exercise.

When Hitler began German rearmament in the 1930s, new military units like Rommel's tank corps were created; they were successors to the traditional cavalry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Robi Warschauer, the passionate military historian, saw an opportunity to participate directly in maneuvers and battles - a dream come true - but his name and family origins precluded his becoming a German officer. He solved the conflict by changing his name to his mother's family name, Thevoz, and by falsifying the family tree. When next I heard, he had started a career as a German tank corps officer, and had begun to experience military history in the making.

That many of his cousins now came to be labeled half-Jews constituted a problem for him. Unlike those who were proud of the label, he requested that we assist him in avoiding the possibility that his family tree be discovered.

At that time, 1938, we had just received a manuscript commissioned by the bank Mendelssohn & Co. to commemorate Moses Mendelssohn's 200th birthday. It was a typewritten document prepared by Dr. Richard Wolff, listing all the descendants of Moses Mendelssohn and his wife Fromet Gugenheim- more than 1,000 persons. Dates of birth, marriage and death were listed, as well as profession, religion and any other matter of interest. I am not sure how many copies existed but each of us in the younger generation received a copy.

Robi Warschauer lived in fear that one of the manuscripts would fall into the hands of officials who made it their business to check up on the ancestry of German officers. He wrote to each of us asking us to burn our copies; most of my cousins did so. I felt that the manuscript was a piece of family history probably never to be assembled again, so I hid my copy.- After the war and after Hitler's end I received many requests for copies of the manuscript. I commissioned a student in the Department of Germanic Languages in Chapel Hill to type a corrected copy that I duplicated and sent out to relatives. I used my new desktop computer in 1988 to produce an alphabetical index to all the names appearing in the pages.-

When the war and Hitler were finished, many of my relatives again became proud of their descent from Moses Mendelssohn. The burning of books, including those of Moses Mendelssohn by Hitler's followers, was soon forgotten.

Robi Thevoz survived the war and became a professor of history at the University of Berlin. He never changed his name back to Warschauer, but I understand that he lived to the end of his life in the Warschauer family house in Grunewald.

His story reflects the conflicts that families such as ours faced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Central Europe. In his case, the conflict was weighted strongly by his great but narrow gift for one field of human endeavor; though I consider that he behaved rather unheroically, his dilemma can be understood, and I find it not in me to judge him harshly.

I am aware that the family history that I am about to relate, inasmuch as it contains no reference to the special achievements that attract attention to such histories, may be interesting only to those who are related to the family. I remind the reader of his priviledge to pick and choose.

The Witt family, as far as is known, had come to Schleswig Holstein on the North Sea coast sometime around the year 1000 from the West, from Holland. They farmed their land and bred milk cows from then on; I know at least that they were still doing so when I visited in 1970, and when the most popular names were still- and are - Detlef and Peter, the names my brother and I were given.

When my great-grandfather, Johann Nikolaus Witt, one of nine children, left the farm, he began a new phase in the family history; otherwise we might have all grown up as cattle farmers. As it turned out, four generations wrought great changes.

Johann Nikolaus Witt wrote with quill and ink in meticulous Gothic-German script. I have several of his manuscripts in my possession, and something of the person can be inferred from them. I believe that he was very intelligent, ambitious, pedantic, and not very easy to get along with. He may have suffered from the same fits of anger that could be observed in the next three generations.

He was born on October 12, 1808 at Heuwisch, Dithmarschen in a big, old farmhouse in which stables, barn and living quarters were all under the same roof. Similar farm houses stand still in many places in that area. Nearby was the shore of the North Sea, hidden from the house by a large dam that had to be maintained by the family. Such households were called "Deichgrafen", and the sea was at the same time part of their livelyhood and a continuous threat. Witts had farmed the land and bred their cattle in that area for many hundred years,- and they still do so, as I found out on a visit in 1970.

When he left homestead he also left homeland, never to return again. He left reportedly because he discovered that his studies of pharmacy did not excuse him from military service as his medical colleagues were excused. At any rate, he arrived at his new home in Sankt Petersburg, (now Leningrad) around the early 1840s. There he taught courses in pharamacy and chemistry, advising on the layout of manufactories; he seems to have been an expert in sugar and wine-making. His drawings of the proposed plants were neat and heavily detailed, labeled sometime in Russian, sometime in German.

He married Elisawetha Christianstochter Zwerner, at that time the widow Bedell, of a Russian family with German origins. Their first child, my grandfather Otto Nikolaus Witt, was born in Moskau in 1853; the second child, Anna Margaretha, was born in Kossun in 1855.- 70 years later Onkel Erich Sommerhof, Anna's husband, became a frequent visitor to our house in Grunewald.

There exists a printed visiting card, allegedly used by him, that reads "Jean Nicolas de Witt, conseiller honoraire de sa majeste, l'empereur de Russie", but I have never found evidence that he was actually knighted and given a title by the Russian emperor. Some of my cousins believe that this card was produced long after his death by a snobbish aunt of ours.

There is better evidence of his political involvement, not only in historical literature but in a long report in his own hand. He became somehow entangled in the Petraschewsky plot in 1848. As a consequence, he had to flee Russia overnight in order to avoid being sent to Siberia, a fate that was not eluded by his fellow conspirator Dostojewski. He returned only many years later, probably to reclaim property abandoned in his 1848 flight. His handwritten report of the plot,- soon to be published in a German history journal,- seems to me to reflect more of how he wanted to be perceived by his contemporaries than the truth; the birthdates and birthplaces of his children contradict his account.

Nevertheless his memoir agrees with most of the known facts, as they appear for instance in biographies of Dostojewski.- I have transcripted his manuscript and will enclose it as a separate chapter in these sketches.- In his letters he declares that there was in fact no plot against the life of the tsar. The discovery of "plots" had to be made from time to time in order to allow the tsar to sleep, temporarily confident in thwarting of schemes that his distrust and persecution mania imagined. According to Johann, high government officials hatched a plan to select organizations and groups for designation as "plots". Johann claims that his society for the reading of modern literature was one of the groups chosen for victimization.

In any case, having fled with his wife and children- by some accounts literally in the middle of the night- we find him crisscrossing Europe in search of a country in which he can settle without danger from the changing mood of a tyrant.

The country he found was Switzerland, and there he taught to the end of his life at the Federal Polytechnicum in Zürich. This was a federal institute established by the Swiss constitution, as distinguished from the regional universities; in curriculum it is comparable to the Massachussetts Institute of Technology and the California Institute of Technology. He and his descendants- and so I- became Swiss citizens.

According to records I discovered in Russian archives only recently, Johann died in Zürich in 1872; he was the only member of his family to leave the homeland. His wife Elisawetha, nee Zwerner, died in Zürich in 1899 at the age of 85; her grim face is known to me only from photographs.

My grandfather Otto Nikolaus Witt, Johann's only son, was born in Moskau in 1853. He grew up in Zürich, where he studied chemistry. He lived in Germany, in Elsass, and later in England. I own his application to Queen Victoria for a patent for a chemical process, written when he was 22, and his collection of microscopic preparations of quartz skeletons of algae, gathered before he was 20. His correspondence about the collection was worldwide.

Also at an early age he published his theory of chromophores and chromogens. It states that two specific groups have to be contained in a chemical compound to produce a strong color; the theory became an important guide in the search for new dyes in the blossoming fiber industry.

He founded and edited Prometheus, a popular scientific journal, containing papers explaining such things as ice crystals and patterns on colored papers. In 1946 I met an old lady who asked me whether I was related to the great Otto N. Witt, whose articles in Prometheus had been her favorite reading when she was a young woman.

He produced numerous scientific publications on dyes and dyeing, on chamical isomery and homology. I own three volumes of his bound essays and two little volumes with printed reports and letters from his many trips. Not only did he follow in his father's footsteps professionally, but he was, like his father, an inveterate traveler and writer. I have no complete collection of all his writings, and I believe that none exists.

Recently one of my cousins sent me a large book he had acquired at auction in Germany; it was a volume with writings of Otto N. Witt, published in 1902, describing the development of the German chemical industry in the previous 25 years. More such volumes may turn up later.

One little book bound in leather recounts an 1889 trip to Southern Karpathen in Hungary; another, published in 1900, tells of his part in the Paris World Exhibition. There is a list of seating arrangements at the Exposition's opening: he was seated next to Queen Victoria. I own manuscripts of speeches he gave at special occasions such as the Emperor's birthday celebration in Berlin. And there is finally a package described in another chapter: photographs of his orchid hybrids, each with name and scale. All bear witness to a rich and productive life.

Ethel (step-grandmother) Witt with daughter Ethel Witt-von Gwinner, Tante Baby

My mother remembered him as a very impressive presence. According to her he was huge, meaning tall and heavy, and at home wore colorful velvet jackets, dark red or green.

He was was married twice, first in 1881 to Maria Clara Elisa Hüttlinger in Hamburg. Her mother was from Cuba, and her father a merchant of Hamburg. Elisa died in 1893, and in 1895 he married Elisabeth Ethel Doughty, the governess of his five children and the daughter of a British parson. The daughter of that marriage, Ethel Elisabeth, I knew well as "Tante Baby", a name that stayed with her into old age.

Otto Witt died in Berlin at age 61. He was then professor of chemistry at the Technische Hochschule Charlottenburg and director of its chemical institute. He had been Rektor (president) of the Hochschule with the title Geheimer Regierungsrath. Thus he had long been attached to a German institution similar to his father's Swiss institution. His life was passed far from his cattle farmers' origins, in the center of the rising German empire. It marked, in my opinion, the peak of the Witt family's achievements.

I know very little of my grandmother Elisa Witt, nee Hüttlinger. She probably did not have a very easy life at the side of a lively and overpowering husband. In fourteen years of marriage she had five children; my father was the third. Photographs show her to have had a long, narrow face of dark complexion; her hair also was very dark. I know her largely from the golden Spanish haircombs my sisters inherited from her, and from stories told us some thirty years after her death by Tante Eve, her best friend. Elisa died in Berlin in 1893, at the age of only 35 years, leaving her fortune in equal parts to her five children.

At least in the eyes of her oldest stepdaughter, my aunt Irene Witt-Pfuhle, Otto Witt's second wife, the former governess of the children, was evil personified. When I was a child she had lived in Germany for more than thirty years, but still spoke with a strong British accent, using always the wrong German articles. Her greatest praise for my father was: "Felix looks so English." After the Second World War, about 50 years after her arrival in Germany, she returned to England, where she had always believed she was truly at home, to live with her sister. A few months later, in great disappointment, she returned to her daughter and grandchildren in Bavaria.- It seems to me that when one longs for one's place of origin, it is frequently for a time as well as a place- a time for which no return is possible.

My father Felix Herbert Witt appears in my chapter on my early environment; here I recall only a few dates and facts. He was born in Berlin-Charlottenburg in 1887 and died in Berlin in 1943. He went to school in Berlin, and studied chemistry under his father at the Technische Hochschule, leaving with a diploma as a chemical engineer and a doctorate in Engineering.

He married Emma von Mendelssohn in 1913, and served during the whole of the First World War (1914-1918) in the Signal Corps, soon becoming an officer. He made clear that he enjoyed military life very much; that was also apparent from his enlistment in the Turkish Armay in 1918 and his delayed arival home in 1920. Maybe he never found his way back into civilian life? Although my mother and he were finally divorced in 1925, they had separated much earlier.

His professional career was very different from that of his father- much less successful. At his marriage he became, thanks to his father-in-law, the director and owner of a perfume factory in Berlin. He used to take us on visits there in the 1920s.

A few years after the divorce, the factory went into bankruptcy, but at that time he lived in grand style as owner of a beautiful estate, Neue Mühle in Biesenthal, East of Berlin, with a town apartment in West Berlin. Each establishment had an elderly housekeeper, Mrs. Zickelbein in Berlin, Mrs. Pippin in the country. The country house was on a lake and was approached by a driveway lined with huge chestnut trees, each many centuries old. It would not surprise me to learn that the trees were the reason why he bought it. We loved to go there on weekends. It was at the country house that he indulged his interest and love for parrots and pigs.

My surmise is that he lived mainly at the expense of a large divorce settlement received reluctantly from my mother's father; there are documents that make that seem likely. There was also a special paragraph in his father-in-law's testament which prohibited us, his grandchildren, from sharing any inheritance with our father.

He might be considered a "playboy", since his life revolved around beautiful women, elegant parties, and all the trimmings of wealth. He had inherited independent wealth from his mother, to be spent at his discretion when he came of age. One of the ways he spent this inheritance was to have an elaborate set of china made for him in Nymphenburg in Bavaria, more than 70 pieces, including candle holders, large bowls, many salt cellars etc.. I found out that fifty years after its making in 1900, people still remembered working on it.

Nymphenburg was woven into the last days of his life, when he lived in dreams in which he resided in the Bavarian Royal Castle there. In accordance with his will, I as oldest son inherited the set, but I found at his death that it had long been pledged as security against a loan from his brother-in-law Hans von Gwinner. The claim was generously dropped.- My younger brother also inherited Nymphenburg china, a set painted especially for my father after the pictures of parrots in Buffon's eighteenth century Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux.

By the late 1920s, my father had lost everything; he told us that he was hiding from tax investigators. We regarded that as wonderfully adventurous. When we came to see him on Saturdays or Sundays, we went to cheap movie houses and saw whatever films were playing, however wild. We enjoyed them indiscriminately, and I doubt that they did us any harm. Almost at every visit we were introduced to a different lady friend; some were very nice, some were not so enjoyable. I have fond memories of the Princess Trubetzkoy and her companion, who prepared a wonderful borscht;- and an American divorcee, Miss Franksen;- and my aunt on my mother's side Lotte Mendelssohn Bartholdy, called "Hundelotte" (because of her love for dogs).

He began to work for various pharmaceutivcal companies, promoting and explaining their products to physicians. In this he was obviously successful thanks to his good manners and thorough knowledge, so that at the time of his death he was relatively free of debt. Even during his last years he was much in demand socially for playing bridge and decorating parties as a good-looking, well-mannered and well-dressed guest.

His considerable writing skills and wide knowledge are apparent in his letters, but to my knowledge he never published anything.-I am aware that I have stressed fragments, events and deeds that are supportive of my thesis about the aging of families, but he seems to me an example of a person representing the late age of a family.

To summarize this review of 200 years: I have treated the Witt male line as a continuum. As I noted at the beginning, almost nothing is known about the women and their forebears. After a long succession of cattle-breeding landowners in Norderdithmarschen in North Germany near the Danish border, of whom none stands out as particularly remarkable, there appears one highly intelligent person who leaves family and homeland. He studies, writes, becomes an expert in technical chemistry, moves about in the world, and ends as a teacher in one of the best-known institutions of higher learning in Switzerland. His son, early in life reaching extraordinary intellectual achievements in the same field as his father, earns high recognition throughout the world; his accomplishments survive him and are duly recorded in the "World Who is Who in Science'. In the next generation, that of my father, the special gifts of writing, teaching and skill at technology still exist, but they are no longer used in a professionally succesful way.

Even as I write this condensed history, I discover with some surprise that my own lifelong interests and drives are similar to those of my forefathers. I have felt the urge to write, and it has been manifested in more than 150 scientific publications, three books, innumerable letters and manuscripts such as this one. Like my grandfather and

great-grandfather, I have enjoyed teaching at the university level. I love animals and plants, curious about the ways in which they survive and thrive. I even feel strongly about ownership and responsibility toward land; all in spite of the fact that I grew up without knowing much about the Witt family.

Perhaps the ambition to succeed in the world changes as a family ages; my father had little of it, and it is questionable in me. It seemed to have peaked in the generation of grandfather Otto. Of course this simplifies history very much; still it is interesting to compare it with a similarly simplified history of the Mendelssohns, my mother's family.

The Mendelssohn family is amply documented, and it is frequently through female family members that an ancestral line can be traced. For example, it is known that the mother of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn was Rahel Sara Wahl (died April 1, 1756), a direct descendant of an 11th century pholosopher of Troyes, the much venerated Rabbi Schelomo ben Isaak, called Raschi. While the Wahl ancestors of Moses Mendelssohn were well-recorded Jewish families, his father is the first in his family of which we know anything.

Mendel (Menachem) was born around 1682 in Dessau in central Germany, and died in the same city on May 10, 1766. He spent his life working for the Jewish community in Dessau, as Sofer (writer) and as teacher of the Torah in the temple. It is known that he cared very much for his son, carrying the weak Moses to the temple on his shoulders when the weather was inclement. After the boy left for Berlin at the age of fourteen, his father seems to have seen him only rarely, following his son's rise to fame only from the distance. Some biographers wonder at Moses' rare mention of Mendel, and at how little effort the son made to see the father.

Moses Mendelssohn was born in Dessau on the 6th of September 1729. He died in Berlin on the 4th of January 1786. The date was commemorated on its 200th anniversary in a moving "Friend of Men" (Menschenfreund) ceremony that I attended. His original name was Moses Dessau, but he became best known by the name that was to be used by all his descendants, Mendelssohn.

Several biographies have been published, the first by his oldest son Joseph Mendelssohn as an introduction to his father's collected works. The next book by Dr. M. Kayserling of more than 500 pages contains a supplement of letters from and to Moses and some of his notes; it appeared 1862. The most extensive biography, written in the United States by Alexander Altmann, appeared in 1973; it uses not only Moses Mendelssohn's own writings, but writings and acounts by his contemporaries, to paint a portrait of a very intelligent, gentle but firm thinker of the age of enligtenment.

Moses Mendelssohn's collected writings were first published in 1843, and a much more extensive collection was begun in 1929 for his 200. birthday, and was continued after 1945.- Bookkeeping was his profession to the end of his life, philosophy his avocation. He considered that to earn money as a philosopher would be to degrade philosophy.

His quiet persistence was tested even on his trip from home to Berlin, when he followed his beloved teacher Rabbi Fränkel. He arrived late at a Berlin gate that had already been closed for Jews. He wearily trudged around the city walls to another gate, the last to be open. When asked by the guard why he wanted to enter Berlin, he supposedly answered, "I want to learn." The entrance register preserves the notation that one ox and one Jew were admitted.

The daily routine of his later years has been reported by contemporaries. He rose at four or five each morning, spent three or four hours at his beloved philosophy, perhaps writing, perhaps in discussion with young adherents, considering such questions as immortality of the soul, criteria for beauty in art, the role of religion in life. These "Morning Hours" composed one of his last books, and were fondly recollected by participants, among other his oldest son Joseph and the brothers Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

After this morning exercise he had breakfast and went to work at the business of Bernard, the silk merchant- first as bookkeeper, later as partner in the firm. At home again after these two full-time occupations, he was likely to be awaited by foreign visitors, who wanted to discuss his writings with him or merely meet him. Fromet would bring in dinner for husband and visitors while they continued their conversations. It is said that because of his precarious health and hunched back he preferred to stand behind his chair, eating some dried bread, drinking little. He went to bed early, to rise after only a few hours to resume his writing and teaching.

He had become well known after the publication, in 1767, of his book "Phaedon, or about the Immortality of the Soul", consisting of three dialogues in the fashion of those attributed by Plato to Socrates. The idea of the book had come to him after he translated works of Plato into modern German, and discovered that the arguments were unconvincing to modern readers. He rehearsed the same content and form, but inserted modern philosophical explanation into the arguments; the effort was persuasive. He was thirty-eight years old.

The book was seven years in preparation, had been discussed with thinkers such as Diderot and Iselin, and was when published a best-seller, even by modern standards. To everybody's surprise the first edition sold out in four months; a second, a third and fourth edition followed in short order. Other publishing firms sold reprints: translations into French, Russian and other European languages appeared. According to Altmann, the success was was due to a number of factors, above all to the language, moving between prose and poetry, and of course to the philosophy of the author,- what was said and the way it was said. Copies of the book can still be found in antiquarian bookstores- friends periodically make me presents of new editions.

To many of its readers, the book's lucid preamble about the life and character of Socrates suggested Moses Mendelssohn himself; some eighteenth century writers called him the "German Socrates".

I have selected only a few stories that portray something of his character. Well-known are his closeness to his family, his devotion to his good friends, his respect for the opinion of others. He was also said to be tolerant but I consider that in a certain way he was not: he never yielded in his opinion of what was right, however gently he listened and argued.

So he saw no reason to adopt what was now the dominant religion in Central Europe and in Prussia the state religion. Like his friend Lessing he believed that any religion that contained people "beloved by God and man" was a good religion. His younger son Abraham, father of the composer, did convert to Christianity with his wife and children, but as Abraham explained in a letter to his daughter Fanny, it was a matter of convenience. The letter was widely quoted by converts in the eighteenth and nieteenth centuries. Abraham even adopted a second name, Bartholdy, and advised his children to eventually drop Mendelssohn from the new compound name; they never did.

Lavater, the Swiss Protestant fanatic and mystic once engaged Moses in controversy on the matter of religion and conversion. A popular poem of the time depicted Lavater's tactless and inuendo-laden challenge; it accurately portrayed Mendelssohn's gentleness in a polite but ironic wry answer:

Lavater: Rely on Father as you've done,
But give some credit to the Son.
Have faith while God and Heir endure
That your investments are secure.

Moses' reply: No need investing in some other
While there's an Everlasting Father.

(this in my opinion excellent free translation was done by my friend Charles F. Reed)

This is the German original:
Lavater writes to Moses:
Ihr glaubt doch an den Vater schon,
So glaubt doch auch an seinen Sohn.
Ihr pflegt doch sonst bei Vaters Leben
Dem Sohne gern Credit zu geben!
Moses answers:
Wie solten wir Credit ihm geben,
Der Vater wird doch ewig leben.

This candid response assigned to Mendelssohn was in fact very like his fearless but courteous exchange with Friedrich the Great, the king of Prussia. It has to be noted that Moses's stay in Berlin depended on the continuous approval of the king, who was not one of his sincere admirers. Friedrich had published a volume of poems that Mendelssohn criticized severly in his literary journal. He was angrily informed that the king did not take kindly to such criticism. Moses replied that if a king became a poet he had to be judged as a poet, not as a king.- A short time later, when the newly formed Prussian Academy of Sciences unanimously elected Moses Mendelssohn a member, the absolute and "tolerant" king vetoed his election. Membership was never offered again. (Note to my children: Do I observe some of MM's traits in you?)

There were friendships enough to recompense for the animosity of the king. Early in the Berlin years Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the art critic, philosopher and writer, became his friend for life. As an early sign of friendship, Lessing secretly published Moses' first writings; his shy young friend had not dared to send them to the publisher.- He was also helped by Nicolai, himself a writer and publisher, with whom he exchanged ideas and visits throughout his life.

Of course much less is known about Fromet Mendelssohn, nee Gugenheim. She is always described as a worthy companion of her famous husband, though they were mismatched at least in language. He wrote and spoke a much-admired clear German, which he had taught himself; and he learned by himself later English, French, Greek, Latin and Hebrew. In one of her few existing letters, she writes in an uneducated mixture of Yiddish and German.

Her life cannot have been easy: she bore ten children, of whom she raised six successfully- the usual rate of survival at the time. Two of her daughters were good writers: Henriette, who lived most of her life in Paris; and Dorothea Veit-von Schlegel; both were active in the struggle for womens' emancipation.

Fromet administerd Moses' estate after his early death, extracting from Friedrich the Great's successor the Generalschutzjudenprivileg, which permitted her and her children to live permanently in Berlin. That achievement was one of the preconditions for the family's prosperity and rise to prominence.

In the male line in the next four generations- Joseph (1770-1840), his son Alexander (1798-1871), Alexander's son Franz (1829-1889) and grandson Franz (1865-1935),- my grandfather- there is a common pattern, apart from the fact that they all were born and died in Berlin. The pattern can be gleaned from a history written by my cousin Felix Gilbert (1975) "Bankiers, Künstler und Gelehrte". As the title promises, his book describes the bankers, artists and scholars of the Mendelssohn family throughout the nineteenth century, revealed in large part in their letters.

All four were bankers by profession, guiding the family bank successfully through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth until it was closed by Hitler in 1935. The power and wealth of the bank led all of them to government service and honors: help in settlement of the French debt to Prussia at the end of the Napoleonic wars and a similar debt at the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. Great-grandfather Franz was knighted by the German Emperor Friedrich III, and his French wife played a role in this. All four loved or played music as more than a hobby; there were periods when each seriously considered becoming a professional musician. All spoke and read German, French, Latin, Greek. All felt close to science and supported it, from Joseph who frequently helped his friend and fellow student Alexander von Humboldt, to the last Franz, who was a cofounder and lifelong treasurer of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft, later called the Max Planck Gesellschaft. Like Moses Mendelssohn lifelong businessmen- they helped to write and implement the laws guiding German trade- but they spent nearly equal time in the arts and sciences that were their genuine interests.

It is remarkable that these many interests and activities were not apparent in the generation that immediately followed them.

Finally all four married strong, gifted, generous women whom I will describe in due course.

The eldest son of Fromet and Moses, Joseph Mendelssohn, my great-great-great-grandfather, was born in 1770, only 16 years before his father's death. One can only guess what a scholarly and educated man he was. All of his books were published anonymously. The restriction for Jews in Prussia were still such that he was prevented from freely choosing his profession. His wish to become a university professor and scientist was at least fulfilled by his oldest son Benjamin. And together they edited the first edition of the collected works of Moses Mendelssohn. Joseph anonymously supplied the biography of the introduction. I recently discovered that a book about Dante and the Italian poets of Dante's time was one of Joseph's anonymous works, published in Italy. There may be others.

In 1793 Joseph married Henriette Meyer, daughter of the court administrator (Hoffaktor) of the Duke of Mecklenburg.- A Hoffaktor lived as splendidly as a duke, but enjoyed none of the duke's privileges.- Henriette's brother married Joseph's sister Recha; Recha became an aunt to the composer Giacomo Meyerbeer.

The advocates of womens' rights and the advocates of equality for Jews found friends in Henriette (or Hinni as she was usually called), and her friends and relatives Henriette Herz and Dorothea von Schlegel. At home, as her letters show, she was a peacekeeper at the center of the rapidly spreading Mendelssohn family.

The letters reveal a competent, lively and highly educated woman. No wonder her many nieces and nephews loved this cordial person. In one letter, she is slightly critical of her brother-in-law Abraham and his wife Lea for their musical soirees, their social ambition and their conversion to Protestantism. She insists on regular visits, however, because brothers should stay close. She could not know at the time that she wrote that her son Alexander would marry into the atmosphere of wealth and ambition; he married Lea's niece, a granddaughter of the rich and powerful Daniel Itzig of Berlin.

Like his father, Joseph had several good life-long friendships, but the longest and oldest was that with Alexander von Humboldt, the natural scientist, geographer and world-traveler. They had studied together as boys. A story frequently told is of Joseph's solution to Humboldt's predicament when the house in which Humboldt had an apartment was sold. Humboldt and his collections (they filled many shelves to the ceiling) were to* be moved out; Humboldt felt that he was too old to move. Joseph quickly bought the house instead, so that Alexander could live there for the rest of his life.

In fact Alexander survived Joseph, and stayed a good friend for Joseph's widow Hinni. There are descriptions of the old pair, leaning against each other in mutual support when they came to dinner at the royal palace.

The story of the buying of the house indicates the beginning prosperity of the family. Another indicator was Joseph's acquisition of the vineyards and house at Horchheim on the Rhine in 1819. There Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Clara Schumann and many other contemporaries were frequent visitors. Doubtless they learned something of the harvesting of grapes; it was an important part of the correspondence between Hinni and Joseph. In one letter she admonishes her husband that he return in the fall to his bank in Berlin, though she understood that as he grew old he preferred to stay in Horchheim for the harvest.

Joseph and Hinni's second son is my great-great-grandfather (two times, because two of his grandchildren became my grandparents) Alexander Mendelssohn, who lived from 1798 to 1871. His older brother, Benni, had fulfilled his father's dream and had become a professor of history and geography at the university of Bonn, not without difficulties; he was married but had no children. The younger brother took over the family bank, where he was later joined by his first cousin Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy, the younger brother of the composer.

Alexander brought the bank Mendelssohn & Co. to great prosperity and influence. He helped the shaky Prussian government to get back on its feet financially, and was a pioneer in establishing financial relations between Germany and Russia. He inaugurated the placing of Russian loans in Western Europe, helped finance the construction of the railroad across Siberia, and was a pioneer in Germn-Russian financial relations that ended only with the Russian Revolution in 1917. Mementoes of his Russian trips were around the house when I was a child: Russian semi-precious stones, Easter eggs, an agathe box with ruby and gold lock. By the time of his death and the passing of administration to his son Franz and to his nephew, the bank had become one of the most prominent private banks in Central Europe.

It is well documented that he was concerned with social welfare and the role of the state in promoting it. Following the 1848 revolution for example, he supported construction of low-rent apartments in Berlin, something that is familiar as a modern concern. It is also known that he promoted the careers of Jewish scientists.

His wife was Marianne, nee Seeligmann; one of her aunts was the wife of Alexander's uncle Abraham. Another aunt was the wife of Moses Mendelssohn's youngest son Nathan. Marianne thus had more than one link with her husband's family. Both never became converts. Like the rest of the family they had become integrated into German society- all eight of their children married into substantial families- but unlike the rest of the family Alexander and Marianne did not adopt the predominant religion.

Nevertheless with their family of eight children and 35 grandchildren, they were the center of an even wider Mendelssohn family in the nineteenth century. Alexander was sometimes called "the patriarch". The title conveys a sense of distance both in time and approachability, but he becomes less remote if we think of him as the grandfather of both my Mendelssohn grandparents. In a way I got to know him through them. They knew him very well. They lived close enough in Berlin to have dinner with their grandparents every week.

There was a schedule of dinners for all the children. A characteristic scene appears in a family photograph taken June 18, 1865 at Horchheim, the summer house on the Rhine. Alexander and Marianne sit with his brother and his wife, surrounded by family and friends around a table in front of the simple, long two-story house. There were of course other family visitors; letters tell of discussions with Alexander's cousin Felix about Felix' latest compositions.

During the summers in Horchheim Marianne's neighbor was Queen later Empress Augusta. They exchamnged many notes. They had common interests, particularly in philanthropy.

Marianne founded the Mariannenstift for retired servants and employees of the family. Almost a century later it was still in existence; my grandmother, Marie von Mendelssohn used regularly to visit and dine with the residents. In 1935 Hitler, without legal justification, closed the foundation and appropriated the endowment. I wonder if his officials found what I always claimed in jest to be the case, that there our family pictures substituted for pictures of the saints on the walls. They would have found two portraits of Marianne, one as an elegant young woman with a Biedermeier hairdo, the other as a stately old lady.

The portraits fail to betray an interesting extravagance: she owned a very large number of pieces of jewelry. On the basis of the items I know about I estimate that fifty or more pieces were left to her descendants. Nearly all of us, four generations and a century later, have inherited something: a hairpin, a necklace, a ring- usually deep green emeralds set in gold surrounded by diamonds. I find no evidence that these possessions played a central role in her life, and can only speculate about reasons for the collection.

Alexander and Marianne Mendelssohn, together with Caroline Westphal (nee Heine), are great-great-grandparents of mine who caused me great trouble in Nazi times. Were Alexander and Marianne to be counted twice- did I have three Jewish great-great-grandparents or five? In any case, lacking Jewish grandparents or great-grandparents, I was a classificatory problem. I did not fit into any of the German legal definitions of "Mischling" (mixture) in first, second or third degree, nor was I "Arisch" (non-Jewish). My classification did not excuse me from serving in the military, but I could not become an officer in it. About the only consequence of this restriction was that I could not enter officer's clubs; not a great loss for me. On the other hand, at the end of the war, my Jewish great-great-grandparents were deemed assets rather than debits; their presence in my family tree cleared me from any taint of complicity, and I was quickly "denazified". These classifications and the shift from one day to the next now seem ludicrous, but at the time they were matters of life and death.

Franz von Mendelssohn (1829-1889), my great-grandfather, was the fifth child of Alexander and Marianne. He became the head of the family bank after the early death of his older brother Adolph in 1851. A custom that now seems strange but which is found frequently in records of families of that time was the marriage of a younger brother to his widowed sister-in-law. That occurred in this case: Franz married his brother's widow Enole.

Franz and his cousin Ernst von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1846-1909) guided the family business to even greater prosperity and power than before. Because of his high standing in the financial community- but also because he had a French wife- he played an important role as mediator in settling the French war debt to Germany after the 1870/71 war. A short time later in 1888, only a century after Moses' descendants had finally received permission for permanent residence in Prussia, he was knighted by Emperor Friedrich III. In a preserved correspondence between Franz and the Emperor's minister (Franz von Rottenburg), Franz M. was urged to accept the honor without delay. The Emperor was dying, and the knighthood was his special wish.

His letters reveal a warm-hearted and intelligent person, well-read in the literaturs of his time. In one of his letters he jokingly surmised that his wife Enole would like a contemporary French writer because she liked all things French, but that she might change her mind after she had read his works and met him. He bought several French contemporary paintings like Courbet and Daubigny. His life-long religion was protestant.

The family of his wife Marie-Antoinette Enole von Mendelssohn, nee Biarnez, had grown grapes and traded wine for many generations in Bordeaux; Pierre Biarnez, her father, had written "Les Grands Vins de Bordeaux", a fundamental early 19th century work. Enole was born in 1827 and died in 1889, the same year as her husband Franz. She was christened catholic in a catholic family.

The name Enole has an interesting history. Many of my aunts, cousins, my younger sister, my great-niece were named Enole after the original Enole. When in the 1930s I had to obtain my great-grandmother's christening certificate from the Catholic Church in Bordeaux, her name appeared simply as Marie-Antoinette. The mystery was solved by a friend with a Basque dictionary. Enole means "little girl". That is probably how the Bordeaux family referred to her, but the German relatives may have assumed that it was a given name.

She has become familiar to me not only from letters, photographs and portraits but from objects that had belonged to her. In photographs she appears frequently at the piano; her older son Robert plays the cello, her younger son Franz the violin. We have also some of her printed music for trio playing, bound in dark leather with her golden initials.

In a copy of a paintimng by one of Ingre's students she sits as a child on her mother Emma's lap; the portrait now hangs in our living room in America. A lovely portrait as an adult woman hung in the music room of my grandparents. There exists a photograph of my mother, where she wears a dress like the one in the portrait- for a costume party in Berlin, and where my mother looks like her ancestress.

Her harp stood in our music room when I was a child; it was destroyed in the Second World War. A china bowl on which she had painted large blossoms was cherished by her son, my grandfather, until his death.

Enole brought two castles into the family. The French government confiscated both as German property at the end of the First World War. Notwithstanding, my grandfather had stashed away so much of the family's production that I remember that the wine was still served from his cellars in Grunewald in the early 1930s. The smaller castle, Anice, was so amply surrounded by flowers that it was reported that the flowers in summer grew higher than the roofline of the house. Desmirail, dating from the fourteenth century, was larger. My brother visited it during the war and found that Enole and her family were still remembered more than sixty years after she had left.

In her library were Greek, Latin, French and German books, small volumes she read in bed in the evening. This was the radiant person who added much to the Mendelssohn family, including some characteristics that reappear in subsequent generations.

Franz was also a warm-hearted and intelligent person. He played a conciliatory role in politics. In contrast to his conservative cousin Ernst, he was a liberal.

In letters to his cousins he discussed collecting information on Moses Mendelssohn's descendants in order to draw a family tree. It was the sign of a beginning sense family history, but it was abandoned until two generations later, when, as I have already related, such a list was finally prepared.

Another matter of discussion among the Mendelssohn cousins was the publcation of the letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. There were differences of opinion on the criteria for selection of the letters. They should have read Moses Mendlssohn's advice about legacies of great men; he was the administrator of Lessing's legacy. His opinion was that it was not the privilege of later generations to shape memories through selection,- of interpreting how or what a man should have been.

My closeness to my grandfather Franz von Mendelssohn allows me to see him from several different aspects, as if he were more than one person. Until his death at my age 17, I saw him on the average of three times a week, and I was continuously surrounded by evidences of him, maybe a little bit too much. I saw his large house from my bedroom window, I read frequently about him in the newspapers and magazines, I overheard people talk about him. My upbringing reflected his likes and dislikes.

Marie und Franz von Mendelssohn with daughters Evelyn + Emma (in foreground) and other relatives in Nordheim, late 1890s.

He was born in 1865 in the old family house in Jägerstrasse in central Berlin, and he died in 1935 in Berlin-Grunewald, in the house he had built shortly after his marriage. His life was greatly affected by the death of both of his parents within a year, when he was in his early twenties. In March of that year 1889 he had married his first cousin Marie Westphal, daughter of his aunt Clara nee Mendelssohn. My grandmother related how he had come to Thun in Switzerland to propose. He had just finished his law degree in Berlin, after military service in two of the most elegant regiments of the Imperial German Army, the Bonner Husaren (stationed near Horchheim) and the Fürstenwalder Ulanen (stationed near Berlin). She obviously accepted the proposal, and thereafter it developed into a long and harmonious marriage.

First with his older brother Robert, who was said to be the more adventurous one, and then alone, he guided the family bank from 1889 to 1935. He was successively director and Senior Partner; and I believe that he was very much in charge.

In a biography published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death, there appears a long enumeration of his offices, honors, medals etc. I will only enumerate some of them here. Besides his position of head of one of the largest international European banks of his time, he was a life-long member of the Prussian Herrenhaus, a body somewhat comparable to the British House of Lords. He was a member of the Reichswirtschaftsrat and of the genral council of the Reichsbank. He was the president of the administration of the German-Dutch finance agreement. He was the first Germnan ever to hold the office of the President of the International Chamber of Commerce. His acceptance speech for that office was the first directly broadcast from Europe to the United States. His physician had advised him against taking the trip to New York. He was the President of the German Industrie and Handelstag. He was cofounder and Treasurer of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft for the support of the sciences (later renamed Max Planck Gesellschaft). Because of that office we children got to know many of his acquaintances: Max Planck, Albert Einstein, Haber, von Harnack and others, whose hands I remember shaking as a boy.

While such lists testify to a strong sense of public and private duty, they do not shed any further light on a complex person, and should not be the only testimony to survive him.

I have been critical of such biographies. There were his humanitarian and artistic interests, for instance. Charitable foundations such as the Society for the Protection of Children against Abuse and Mistreatment (Verein zum Schutz der Kinder vor Ausnützung und Mißhandlung) were near and dear to his heart.

He supported many young artists. In Arthur Rubinstein's memoirs I read recently that at his arrival in postwar Germany as a young pianist in the 1920s he was first supported by the Mendelssohns.- Toward the end of my grandfather's life he was concerned in helping Jewish musicians to emigrate. I recall a concert in my grandparents' great ballroom; I was invited to stand with my grandmother at the entrance, greeting our visitors. The purpose of the gathering was to help collect funds for musicians' emigration to Palestine. Albert Einstein played the violin rather scratchily but enthusiastically.

My grandfather's feeling for music and musicians came from the heart; it was a continuation of the music he had made together with his mother and brother. He played his Stradivarius violin in a chamber music group that met regularly at his house, or earlier with his friend Joseph Joachim. There was music being made once or twice a week for as early as I can remember hearing it. It all ended with my grandfather's stroke in 1934.

Then there were the visual arts. In Paris at the end of the nineteenth century, my grandparents had bought several outstanding works of van Gogh, Cezanne, Manet and other painters. They traveled again to Paris when they were over 60 years of age, and this time to my surprise came back with a Braque still-life and a pink mother-and-child by Picasso. At that time most people were too polite to laugh when they saw these "modern" paintings hanging in the Mendelssohn's old-fashioned music and living rooms; only a few, particularly my mother, thought very highly of what had been brought back from Paris. Of course many years later these paintings were valuable parts of Franz' estate, when all was sold by his only son.

An aspect of his life that he took pains to conceal was his enormous wealth. Various estimates of his financial status have been made. A book examining early 20th century Berlin millionaires finds him one of the wealthiest men in the city, with an estimated annual income of 1.5 million Reichsmark. At his death after the Depression, one estimate puts his assets at close to 900 million Reichsmark. However accurate the figures may be, a sizable sum of money was involved. I have calculated, that at the final distribution of his estate we, the sole heirs, got about 1% of that.

His older brother had similar assets and six of his cousins must also be considered to have been wealthy, but in newspaper articles it was he who was called the "Nabob". He had inherited most of his property from his parents, and I believe that it slightly embarrassed him.

His embarrassment was apparent in something which I call inverse snobbishness. The offices of the directors of the family bank were all lavishly furnished and held valuable paintings and tapestries, but at the end of the directors' corridor on the upper floor was a room for the senior partner. It was a small room containing, to the best of my recollection, a simple desk and a few hard chairs; on the walls were merely several prints of old Berlin.

I really believe that throughout his life he valued art and human kindness higher than wealth and power. This was not hypocrisy, as might be suspected in one so wealthy, and I imagine that if he,- and I have seen it in my grandmother,- would have lived under much reduced circumstances, they would have neither lost dignity nor the ability to enjoy life. I find it important to write this down, because of some people who joined my family late, and who from their incomplete knowledge of all our lives in the early part of this century have constructed retrograde an image of pompousness; I believe that to be untrue.

I never saw my grandfather angry, but my mother, his oldest daughter, could remember a single occasion when she had. That was when his four daughters had in play locked their little brother Robi in a drawer and forgotten about him. When my grandfather learned that his only son had been in real danger, he became very angry indeed.- One of his weaknesses may have been that he firmly believed that the bank had to be turned over to another generation of male Mendelssohns. His four married daughters and their future descendants were excluded from consideration.

Unfortunately these hopes were invested in a son who never showed any inclination for banking, or for that matter for any serious professional occupation. I saw my uncle Robert only once on my visits to the bank. He already had become one of the "directors". He showed me some toy boats hidden in a cupboard in his office; he sailed them in his washbasin. In a way this typified his banking career.

Probably the tragedy of Franz von Mendelssohn's life was his failure to be succeeded in the family business by another Mendelssohn. However rich and varied in his life, however filled with friendship and beauty, he regretted that one tradition was to end with him. On my thesis: this event was a sign of the aging of a family.

After the war, at my uncle Robert's behest, a wooden bench was installed in Sankt Georgenhof in a location where one could rest and enjoy a wide view. We young people joked that this was the only bank ("Bank" means bench and bank in German) that Robert ever managed.

Once I introduced Onkel Robi to a Frankfurt banker whose daughter was my schoolmate. They were supposed to discuss the feasibility of reopening the bank Mendelssohn after the war. When I later asked my friend's father about the visit, he told me that he had met an unusually nice person whom he would like as a friend but under no circumstances as a business partner.

As told before, Marie Westphal was on vacation with her parents in Thun, Switzerland, when her cousin Franz von Mendelssohn arrived to propose to her. She was the daughter of his father's sister Clara (1840-19270. I remember Clara as a very old lady who, under the name "Urchen", still played the piano with great fire, and we played "Tip" with her, a game which I have never encountered anywhere else. Marie and Franz lived together for 46 years, had five children and 20 grandchildren; she survived him for 22 years.

Marie was born in 1867 in Berlin, and grew up with three brothers and three sisters in the middle of the city at the Charite University Hospital, were her father was director and professor of neurology and psychiatry. She died in 1957 at my mother's farm at Sankt Georgenhof, where many of my relatives had taken refuge at the end of the war.

I remember her as a warmhearted grandmother who always gave the most thoughtful presents on all occasions, and who was full of humor. Once in 1927, when she was about to leave for dinner at President von Hindenburg's she claimed that she was to be seated next to an African king who had been a cannibal when younger, and that he had actually eaten people. We admonished her to be very cautious, particularly to be very careful that her hand not get too close to his mouth. We never saw the formal side of her, the side she had really presented at those formal receptions of emperors and presidents, when she wore her diamond tiara and large emerald necklace.

Her humor never deserted her despite the great changes she experienced. Contrast her life as a hostess for 100 people at dinner at her house in Grunewald, and her life only a few years later in a bed/sitting room in Sweden, a story I will tell presently.

As a young girl she had received cooking lessons arranged for ladies from "good families" in Berlin. She told us that the pupils were not allowed to touch a spoon or a pot- they were expected to look only over the shoulder of the teacher while a dish was prepared. An echo of this instruction came later: After her marriage she moved into her uncle and aunt's big house in Berlin. When she gave her first orders for dinner, the old family cook announced, "The master does not touch that dish!" Again the basic knowledge was the cook's.

Beside her humor she had a pedantic streak. It showed up in the housekeeping, in her managing two large establishments at Grunewald and in the summer house at Rindbach in Austria. Napkins, napkin rings and towels were numbered, and were checked in and out as guests arrived and departed. I still own some of these numbered articles.

Eventually she came to supervise a working staff of more than twenty domestic employees. She continued doing that until she was nearly 70 years old. After her husband's death she lived for a while at the large summer house in Rindbach until the Austrian Gauleiter decided that she was a Jew and expelled her as a birthday present for Hitler.

She stayed for some time at Sankt Georgenhof until for safety's sake her son secretly brought her to Sweden. There she had a room in the house of one of her former employees, the childrens' gymnastic teacher Mrs. Bernhard. She met frequently with two of her cousins, one who had married a chamberlain of the King of Sweden, the other who had been brought out of Theresienstadt by the King. When the war was over, she flew to Paris where a high French official recognized her: she had helped him when he was stationed in Berlin in the 1920s. He provided her with one of the first visa given for the return of a German to Germany.

So in the fall of 1945 we received a call that Omama had arrived at the Swiss/German border and was waiting there. She had returned from exile. Typically, she brought a present for each of the grandchildren.

At Sankt Georgenhof she had a small room to which each day a few of us would be invited for tea. When tea had been taken, she rose to wash the cups and dishes. It was a far different ceremony from those large dinners of her former life, but it may tell something about her to say that at the christening of my daughter Elise, her 25th grandchild, in our minute house in Switzerland, Omama said that this was the small, comfortable house for which she had longed all her life.

Elise's christening, Bern – Bümplitz 1953. Left to right: Emma Witt, Peter + Inge Witt, Marie von Mendelsohn, baby Elise Marie in foreground.

For her eightieth birthday in 1947, only a short time after her return to Sankt Georgenhof from Sweden, we performed a play in the old tradition of the annual grand birthday performances in Grunewald. The Fourth of November at Grunewald was always a special day, requiring extensive preparations. The house's chief electrician, Mr. van der Straate, constructed the stage in the great ballroom, with whatever windows and doors were required for the plays usually written by my aunt Enole Baroness Haimberger. Every child had a part. This annual ritual had been interrupted by my grandfather's death, by Hitler, exile and war.- (It strikes me as remarkable that in 1988, so many years later, my sister, cousin Robi Bohnke, and others still write each other on Omama's birthday).

So this 1947 renewal was a special treat for us "children", now in our twenties. It was something more for me because Inge Feiler, then my fiancee, was present to participate in our old tradtion as a new family member.

This time the central figure of the play was Charles-of-the Ritz, the owner of a beauty salon in New York. He despaired of coping with the wrinkled skin of the aging ladies of New York until he heard one day that there was living in the country in Southern Germany an 80-year-old lady who had the softest, smoothest and youngest looking skin imaginable. He promptly flew there to ask Marie von Mendelssohn the secret of her skin. In a grand finale, we all sang the praises of the healthy life of the countryside, with good food and a family surrounding- the secret that kept her young.

We did not realize at the time that an era had ended.

My grandmother was an excellent and inveterate letter-writer. My last letter from her, written about a year before her death at age 90, contained thanks to Inge and to me for taking care of her oldest daughter, Emma, my mother, in Syracuse. We had originally brought my mother to Bern to live near us, and then had taken her with us to America. My grandmother wrote that on her visit to Sankt Georgenhof my mother looked happier and healthier than she had looked for a long time, and that she appeared eager to experience life in a new country.

Marie von Mendelssohn was a remarkable woman with clear family priorities. Even at a very old age she established a warm and personal relationship with her new granddaughter-in-law, Inge. At Elise's christening, she held her 25th great-grandchild on her lap. Elise was dressed in the lace gown made by her great-great-grandmother Enole for the christening of all the children. We have a film that shows the scene. I sense that some of Marie's modesty, gentleness, humor and intelligent efficiency have reappeared in my daughters, as they fight peacefully for greater justice in the world.

My mother, Emma Witt, nee von Mendelssohn, was the oldest of five children of Franz and Marie von Mendelssohn. It is interesting to consider that relics of this very private person are more readily to be found than those of her famous father, a very public person. They are her designs, the watercolors, the tapestries and rugs that she fashioned during her life. She never held public office or sat on a board of directors, and I know of no speech ever being made by her. But they are not the only signs of gifted and productive human beings.

She lived in the spirit of her family's tradition through her artistry and her friendships, and in the upbringing of her four children, to which she gave high priority.

I describe her in the chapter "Childhood Environment", and will not write further here, except to provide the bare skeleton of her life for the sake of completeness of this chapter.

She lived from 1890 to 1957, first in the old Mendelssohn house in Berlin, then from 1895 on in her parent's house in Grunewald. Around 1924 she moved into her own house in Grunewald, across the lake from her parents, and in 1943 to Sankt Georgenhof, her farm in Southern Germany. She lived in Bern, Switzerland in 1951 close to my wife and me, and went with us to Syracuse, New York in 1956. There she died of a cerebral hemorrhage at age 67, survived by three of her four children and six grandchildren.

I will briefly sketch the bare outline of this Mendelssohn Family History for the purpose of comparison.

A family history began for the Mendelssohns with Moses Mendelssohn's birth in 1729 in Dessau. That was eighty years and three generations earlier than the beginning of the Witt history: the birth of Johann Nikolaus Witt in North Germany.

The young Moses left his parents in Dessau and became a "man of the world" in the sense that his ideas received much attention.

Johann Witt's similar emergence after settlement in Russia occurred about 1828.

Both men made an impression on their time through their writing, publishing and teaching. A difference between the two families may lie in the ability to make friends easily and handle money wisely. No such characteristics are apparent in the Witts; rather, there are indications there of a limited ability to get along with other people.

For the Mendelssohns there followed four generations of continuous rise in social status and wealth, from Moses' son Joseph through Alexander and Franz to the second Franz, while for the Witts there was only one more such rising generation, that of Otto.

My impression is that the generation of my parents in both families marks the end of the rise for both. A kind of "fatigue", a break with the tradition of the earlier generations, can be observed. However well-educated, gifted, socially active they were, they held no public office, did not write for publication, and had no special impact on their times- all in contrast to what had gone on before.

I believe that families such as the two that I have described undergo an individualization and an aging process.

The individualization occurs when an accustomed pattern of existence is interrupted: the traditional home is left and one individual produces noteworthy achievements. That first generation away from home may live under special stress, challenged by strange surroundings to do its best. The next generation may build upon that record, and perhaps achieve even more. Circumstance and special gifts may keep a family in top form over long periods of time. That may be the case for European ruling families such as the Hohenzollerns or Habsburgs: inherited positions of rule helped them to survive in their high status for many generations.

Sooner or later the signs of aging appear, signs similar to those I think I discern in my ancestors. An ineffective "old" generation appears. From then on, individuals are no longer identified with the family; they are again just individuals, though eventually of course a new family history might arise from particular individuals.

Clearly this analysis of what might be called the rise and fall of two families is a great simplification of complex processes. One has to think only of the role that family names might play in the matter of having a history. In the Europe of the Witts and Mendelssohns family names were introduced only around the eighteenth century. Before that time, it was just Peter, Detlef's son; or Detlef, Peter's son; or Moses, Mendel's son. Family names help identification, but when used as they were in Central Europe, they also strongly support male succession and male dominance.

What if the wife takes no longer the husband's family name, as in the case of my younger daughter? Will family identity be lost? Even more interesting: will women occupy positions equal to men in history? Last but not least: will the aging process of families be ended? Who knows? I do not.

WÄUCHEN.

In the summer of 1989 my wife Inge and I paid a visit to two old ladies named Puppi Sarre and Irene Wätjen. I had known them when I was a boy in Berlin. Their father had been an art historian and museum director in the 1920s, and their mother had been a lady-in-waiting,and later a friend, of the German crown princess Cäcilie of Hohenzollern. When I was young, the Sarres were friends of my family, and they were known for the interesting guests which they frequently received in their house in Babelsberg near Berlin. When the ladies now learned that I wrote my memories, they got quite excited and began to speak about Bernhard Waurick,- their good friend and my former stepfather. We all called him "Wäuchen"; and we remembered him fondly. The ladies offered to tell me stories about him "for at least an hour". I was delighted to learn that the fascination with this radiant person, who had touched many lives, was still alive; and I decided to sketch a portrait.

I begin with the translation of the characteristic last letter which I received from Wäuchen in 1965, long after he had disappeared from my life and I had moved to yyAmerica:

"My dear Peter: For a long time we have not heard from each other. I was rather busy, actually with the sale of my house and land. I have a "successor", a medical doctor, who is still employed by the government...who is a nature lover and wants this house for later, so that he can particularly care for it by tending the plantings. I retain the right to live in the house and can look more or less after the whole estate. One is after all quite attached to it, particularly to the many planted trees.

On the other hand, at my age I like a certain detachment. I will be freer and may risk finally to do some travelling. How has your farm developed; particularly how are the milk-rich Nubian goats? Do you still remember the Dorkas antelope from the Sahara? Those were indeed times! and now an elderly woman came on two aluminum crutches up my stairs,- I said:"careful"; "Oh" the 75 year old said,"this is nothing, I am followed by my aunt who is 91!"- Lo and behold, on all four came a mummy. The 75 year old introduced herself:"I am Mrs. General Pohl, my husband has been executed.""My pleasure" I wanted to say,- wish I had said it,- because the executed person was Pohl, the commandant of all concentration camps.-

But I did not let this scary widow into my rooms. From the television machine came the sounds of a show. I said with great presence of mind:"I cannot let you in, because I have visitors". Then I accompanied the two ladies down the stairs, to the courtyard, where their car stood. A granddaughter sat behind the wheel; a second one, about 20 years of age, crawled without difficulty out and rolled around on the ground. Being polite, I wanted to lift her up, when this second creature bit vigorously into my hand.

Nothing like this has ever happened to me before. I was glad to see them all depart: the 91 year old on all fours, the scary widow, the vigorous teenager,- only the driver was normal; without her they would not have managed to come here at all.

You see, dear Peter, that one does not have to circle the earth in Gemini, in order to have adventures. What happens on this earth, is not for me to report; you see and hear it in the same hour on TV and radio,- that is impersonal. Therefore I would rather like to hear from you and your family.
Goodbye for now (until a letter comes from you), with the best wishes for you and yours, your Wäuchen."

This letter is dated October 10, 1965 and came from Oberteisendorf. Post Teisendorf,8221 West Germany.

It is the last of many letters,- the one which I received from Wäuchen shortly before his death. He had been my stepfather for about 7 very important years of my life, 1929 - 1936. It is a pleasure to remember some of the events during which he touched my life, because I learned a lot from this kind, interesting and most exotic person.

We met first in the late 1920s. My mother had received the legal divorce from my father in 1925, several years after he had left us. We lived now,- my mother, we four children, 2 nurses-governesses and 11 servants in the recently completed Grunewald house, which I describe elsewhere (see chapter "Childhood Environment"). My mother's father had given her the house and provided her with an ample monthly allowance, so that she could live comfortably and see her friends. At that time she had so many visitors, that it was said, that she pursued the "Policy of the Open Door", an expression usually used for the foreign policy of Turkey.

I believe that at that time a number of middle-aged gentlemen were interested in marrying my mother,- others were just good friends. We had always house guests, and about every other day guests came to dinner. I established that there was a distinction between my mother's "a few people tonight", and "a small dinner". According to my "scientific" measurements, the former announcement from my mother meant about 10 people, the latter 20 to 30 visitors around the table. In retrospect I see my mother's friends and relatives sitting for dinner in the lovely dining room: the walls are painted in a Japanese bamboo pattern. On all sides hang some of the Japanese woodcuts, which my mother had inherited from her painter-friend Dora Hitz.

After dinner we all marched into the "large room", which had just been created by the young architect Dieter Sattler through joining two separate living rooms; there was frequently music, like songs presented by Therese Schnabel, a friend of my mother's, and the wife of the pianist,-or somebody played the piano. Particularly enjoyable were

Large room in my mother's house; on the left Fernand Leger and Juan Gris

Dieter Sattler's performances of "Der Sachse in Italien" (the Sachse in Italy) or "Der Seekranke" (the seasick).

The walls of the large room were covered with a rough, grey silk-material, and paintings and drawings by Picasso, Gris, Leger, van Gogh, Kokoschka, Nolde and other "modern" artists decorated the walls. Most works of art were acquired by my mother with the help of the dealer Alfred Flechtheim, who was many years later praised for his ability to recognize great art at a time, at which it had not been generally accepted. My mother had a similar ability, and nearly everyone of her acquisitions became later a valuable asset. But that occurred after they had been kept hidden during the Hitler time, and were brought by me undamaged through the Berlin bombings. In the Twenties there were only a few friends who shared her enthusiasm. One was the pianist Bruno Eisner, whom I met many years later in the Gugenheim museum in New York, and he said to me:"How much would your mother have enjoyed this show!" Most people looked politely away and showed a complete absence of appreciation.

Dieter Sattler, who had designed the construction of the "large room", lived in one of the guest rooms in our house. He studied architecture in Berlin with Professor Tessenow, a relatively conservative modern architect. Dieter's father was president of the Technical University in Munich, his mother was an old acquaintance of ours as the daughter of the great sculptor Adolf von Hildebrandt. Hildebrandt's sculptures decorated garden and house of my grandparents, and they could be seen in many public places; his widow lived two blocks away from us in Grunewald.

Dieter is remembered fondly as a very pleasant house-guest, a good friend of my mother, and a person who was always kind to and very entertaining for us 4 children. He had the special ability to diffuse threatening situations at the dinner table: when tension over a disagreement built up between us four children, and when my gentle mother sat helplessly by, he would calmly diagnose the signs of an impending storm. The signs became increasingly similar to our behavior while we continued to argue heatedly. Before hostilities broke out, we usually exploded into laughter,- and the situation became calm. At a much later visit he told me that we had actually sometimes jumped onto the dining table and faught between the plates. However, I believe that this was a exaggeration, but that we were pretty wild.

Dieter was also a special friend of our Schwester Anna, the old nurse which I describe in "Childhood Environment". Once Dieter and Schwester Anna between them organized a memorable summer trip to the Italian sea resort Castiglioncello near Livorno. This happened around 1927, and many aspects of that trip are still fondly remembered and described in "Travel".

Dieter introduced us to an architect friend of his, whom we immediately began to like. His name was Wilhelm von Gumberz, and we soon changed it to "Gummi". Gummi was engaged to be married to Lieselotte von Bonin, another architecture student; amd he brought her to our house to meet all of us. She in turn brought her mother,- whom we later called Tante Mária; Tante Mária was many years later a long time inhabitant of my mother's Sankt Georgenhof (see chapter "End of the Second World War").

Lieselotte was good-looking in a boyish kind of way, and she could tell many entertaining stories. My mother liked her immediately; but it struck me that most of her stories contained malicious information on other people. This disturbed me, but was not at all noticed by my mother. One day my mother said to me: "Petchen, don't you find Lieselotte wonderful!" (she actually used the then fashionable word "himmlisch"). I clearly remember my answer:"She is nice and entertaining, but I hope that we will never become dependent on her!"

It still surprises me that I had such a thought at that early time, because many years later, after Wäuchen had departed from our lives, we actually became dependent on her for the better part of 30 years. Only after my grandmother's, my mother's and my sister's death,- many years later,- when she married a third time my younger sister's widowed husband, I found the strength to let Lieselotte know that I no longer wanted anything to do with her. I still marvel at the thread which Lieselotte began to weave through all our lives around 1930, and at my foresight to suspect anything like that so early.

To return to the time when we four growing children lived among the many guests in the late 1920s in my mother's house, it became soon apparent that one visitor estasblished himself as a special friend of us all: Bernhard Waurick. From the beginning of our acquaintance he seemed to be a particularly interesting person. Only a short time ago he had returned to Berlin from many years in Mongolia and China. He spoke fluent Russian and several Chinese dialects with his friends, and he brought many of these friends to our house. From time to time he gave an informal lecture, for instance in my grandparents' house, where he reported on his years in Mongolia and China, and on his travels across Siberia. Later these tales appeared as a small booklet, which I still possess.

World events had driven this peaceful native of Sachsen into remote areas of the globe. He came from a sedate, catholic family: his sister was the Fürstäbtissin (Prince Abbottess) in a Sachsen nunnery, his brother a farmer. He had more understanding than others for remote cultures and religions- the right person to walk among strangers and observe them understandingly.

Wäuchen told us, that at the beginning of the First World War, in 1914, he had marched with the German army as a soldier into Russia. He had at an early date become a prisoner of war and was confined to an East Russian prisoner camp. Soon he managed to escape and marched East rather than West, never to get back to Germany. He made good use of his ability to acquire quickly foreign languages, first Russian, than Mongolian and Chinese, or, as he frequently pointed out to us, a few of the many Chinese languages. Though a stranger, he lived for about 10 years among the natives of East Asia. When he finally came back to Berlin, more than 10 years later, he preferred to sit cross-legged on a camel cushion rather than on a chair. He liked candle light better than electric lamps, and he surrounded himself with Buddha statues, with the fragrance of incense, and with dark hangings on the walls. I can still see him sitting cross-legged on a cushion in a colorful long, silken robe in our house.

One day my mother asked me to sit down with her on the sopha of her upstairs sitting room; this was a place were confidential and important matters were discussed. She asked me about my feelings toward Wäuchen, and what I would think if she married him. I remember that this did not come to me as a great surprise, and I told her so. She seemed relieved by my supportive attitude. I do not recall that she discussed this with any of her other three children. A few weeks later (in 1929) her second marriage took place. This brought several changes into our lives in Grunewald.

An immediate change occurred in our house: my mother's dressing room, next to her bedroom, became Wäuchen's bedroom. A trap-door was cut into the ceiling of his bedroom, so that he could ascend on a ladder into the large studio above. The studio became a study-contemplation room for Wäuchen, and we were encouraged to visit him there. Heavy curtains subdued the light from the outside,- this had been my mother's painting studio, and it had particularly large windwos. The door which led to the corridor on the top floor was closed off and hidden behind a Persian hanging.

On climbing up through the trap-door, one entered a fairy tale world. There were no longer any chairs in the room, and large cushions lay on the floor. These were the only places to sit down, and this conveyed immediately a feeling of something unusual. There was always a strong fragrance of incense, which I connected with catholic churches and Eastern religions. In order to read, one had to move close to one of the many candles; these were continuously tended: the wicks were clipped, candles had to be replaced. This meant quite a change for me, as my maternal grandfather, who had been most important in our lives, disliked rooms which were not fully illuminated in~~a~~ every corner.

Frequently we were invited to climb up the ladder. On arrival, we were asked to sit down,- my brother, I, sometimes a cousin or two,- and we listened spell-bound to long, rambling tales, in which he intermingled reports of his own travels with adventures by explorers like Sven Hedin. Russian fairy tales were also told frequently, in which we shuddered at the appearance of the witch "Knochenbein" (bone-leg). We were allowed to light additional candles, and to drop incense into the laps of Buddha statues. My older sisters never became involved. They were probably already too grown-up and enlightened at that time, to enjoy childhood flights of fancy. They seemed never to have truly accepted Wäuchen. While he was such a great friend of younger children, he appeared unable to deal with older ones.

The magic room on the third floor was only part of Wäuchen's world, which he shared with us. He was aware of my interest in gardening and in animal breeding, and a remote corner of the garden near the lake was soon designated as my special territory. In this place he helped me to dig the "deepest hole in the world", through which we were supposed to reach the feet of the antipodes. Several times we got near to seeing the soles of the antipodes' feet; however, we never quite reached them. A brook with cement walls was built, where water could run from a garden faucett into a little pond. Salamanders, turtles and goldfish lived there at various times. Around the water we planted special vegetation like papyrus and lotus. Exotic trees, which we got on expeditions to tree farms outside Berlin, shaded cages for guinea pigs, rabbits and squirrels. A Dorkas gazelle, which I describe elsewhere (see "Animals I Knew and Loved"), was bought at a dealer who was an acquaintance of Wäuchen, Mr. Ruhe in Aalfeld. A special enclosure was built adjoining the little grass house; the covered part of the enclosure was decorated with a life-sized painting by my mother of the two brothers surrounded by their animals.

We started to construct a very solid little house of cinder blocks; this was my first experience with stone-and-mortar construction, at which I became much more adept many years later. There was one square room inside, which we furnished with a table and chairs. We could sit there on rainy days and even give our first dinner parties. My grandfather, Franz von Mendelssohn, was invited, and I doubt that he enjoyed the meal of lamb chops and creme caramel, which we had prepared; but he pretended to have a good time.

At the same time Wäuchen organized the long summer trips, which I describe elsewhere (see chapter on "Travels"). He spent a great part of the winter months with planning, reading, finding out what would be worth visiting. I notice that I still do similar planning before we begin a trip now. The trips certainly enriched greatly the period in which we grew up, and 60 years later I feel grateful to Wäuchen for this.

There is an amusing story about Wäuchen, which I tell frequently, and which makes my children still laugh. This sheds some light on Wäuchen's character, which was a strange mixture of generosity and stinginess: he wanted very much to give pleasure through making great gifts, but he could not see his way of spending money for this. It mainly happened on our birthdays, which were always extensively celebrated in our house. On the morning of the birthday we found gifts piled onto a birthday table, and the three other children got "Beigeschenke" (adjunct-presents). Wäuchen probably realized, that we were rather spoiled with presents, and he did not want to contribute unnecessarily. He grabbed some bulky object, frequently the telephone directory, and added it to the things on the table as a present from him. A day later he quietly removed it. This happened several times, and after initial surprise, we accepted this laughingly as one of his peculiarities at our birthdays. We may have secretly pitied friends who did not receive items like telephone directories for their birthdays.

At several occasions it took me a while to discover, that a present was rather useless. I remember receiving a volume of an 18th century natural history, which would have been dear to me as a collector of such books. It took me a while to find out that the other volumes were never to arrive, which made the one volume worthless.

There is one story clearly remembered, in which Wäuchen did not play the main role, but which would hardly have happened the same way without him. It concerns a stolen car. It began at breakfast one morning: Wäuchen was fond of long and extravagant breakfasts, where sometimes fresh Russian caviar, smoked fish or other unusual foods were served. He brought them from the city, and our cousins slightly envied us and shuddered to think of what "sin" went on in our house. On this particular morning, when we sat down for breakfast we learned, that my mother's grey convertible car, a Steir, had been stolen the night before. My mother and Wäuchen had attended a dinner party at a friend's house in Dahlem, and when they wanted to drive home, the car was gone.

Cars at that time were much rarer and more precious than they are now;- that is in the United States of the 1980s. We discussed what could be done next; suddenly the telephone rang. Wäuchen talked to somebody, and he reported to us that a private detective agency had located the car. For a reasonable fee they would bring it back. A little later, while we were still at breakfast and excited, three men appeared. They parked the stolen car in front of the house, pointed out a crack in the windshield; and they gladly followed us inside with an invitation to join the breakfast in progress. As I recall it, we sat with them for several hours; they entertained us with wild stories about the retrieval of this and other cars, and their heroic deeds in connection with their detective work.

According to the report, it had come to a shooting match between the robbers and the detectives, at which time the windshield was hit by a bullet. The robbers than fled, and our car was saved. The story was even more fascinating for us children, as at that time there were no television shows of robbers and policemen; and the first-hand nature of the events cast a spell. They told their stories well, and we could ask questions about details; it was nearly like having lived through the chase ourselves. Around noon-time the three departed under cordial farewells, and they took away a substantial monetary award from our mother. Everybody was happy!

This mood of elation lasted into the afternoon, when a call from the usually sleepy Grunewald police was received. They wanted to follow up the complaint of the morning ,and start to look for the stolen car. We found disagreement between the story our new friends had told us, namely that the police had called them in, and what we heard now. Nobody at the police station had heard about this detective agency. They had not been in touch with them. The only thing the police had done until now was to register the complaint and wait for the time, when they could pursue the matter further.

Soon there came to us the possible interpretation of the events: We had actually hosted the robbers for breakfast. The police surmised that they had developed a procedure, where they stole cars, which they brought back to their owners; consequently they earned gratitude and a reward; and as they had not even kept the stolen goods, the deed was not punishable. When the cars had come back, the owners had lost interest in further pursuit of the matter. We discussed with Wäuchen, who enjoyed the adventure and the guessing as much as we, how much their rate of earning could optimally be, without a punishable deed being committed. The special circumstances at the time made this possible, and there would be a time limit to such an enterprise, at least in Berlin.

Wäuchen was instrumental in the acquisition of Sankt Georgenhof by my mother in the late 1920s. He always expected the next war to start any moment, and he forsaw that it would bring starvation and the invasion of Germany. Hitler had strictly forbidden to accumulate supplies of food, called "hamstern"(hoarding), and so Wäuchen bought only a few cans of sardines at a time and brought them home on different days. Slowly a large pile of those cans piled up in the basement, and the pile became the butt of our jokes. When Wäuchen left us a few years later and the anticipated war had not yet broken out, we began to eat those sardines. I remember that the supply was about exhausted at the time when food in Germany began to be rationed, and when it would have come in handy.

Sankt Georgenhof was systematically developed by Wäuchen to become increasingly independent of the outside world. It had its own electricity generating plant, similar to the plant we had in Berlin. There was a butchery, a bakery, and a smithy. It was supposed to shelter us all one day and provide us with sustenance, independent of the events in the outside world. An ample number of buildings,-14-, could accomodate many people and animals and shelter us all, in case we had to flee from Berlin.- Much later, when Wäuchen had long left, it fulfilled all the anticipated functions, as I report in the chapter on "The End of the Second World War".

I still marvel at Wäuchen's prophetic abilities. That he never lost interest, I experienced in the 1960s. At that time he had been divorced for many years, my mother had died, and my sisters and brother were far away and no longer interested in a farm. I advocated sale, which my brother-in-law took in hand. When I mentioned the offered sales price to Wäuchen, he advised me not to accept, because the buyer, my aunt and future wife of the brother-in-law, had already an offer for resale several times the amount offered us. I still regard it as a mistake that I agreed on the low sales price, particularly as it was resold soon afterwards for more than 10 times the amount we had received. I believe now that the sale was a mixture of several peoples' deceipt and greed, and of my inefficiency.

Wäuchen had strong mystical-religious beliefs; on that basis, and with the help of a few of his strange friends of Russian and other extraction, he initiated experiments with the biologic-dynamic method of agriculture in Sankt Georgenhof. One of the prime advisors was a Mr. Sabaschnikoff, who supervised the piling of long mounds of manure, dry leaves and sand; it was all covered with earth. When the moon had reached exactly the right configuration, minute amounts of dandelion extract were injected at intervals into the piles. Before the injection, the extracts had been diluted several times in water.

Mixing of extract with water took place in wooden vats; it could only be done at moonlight with wooden poles. After the first dilution, a small sample was transferred into another vat of water, stirred in the same way; another sample was again transferred, and so on, until one could calculate that the final drop, which served to inoculate the compost pile, could at best contain a few molecules of the original dandelion extract. This agreed with stress by the believers on a non-materialistic approach to fertilization.

As another part of the method, the fields, onto which the inoculated compost was distributed, were planted with mixed seeds: like wheat together with peas, or rye with beans. Harvesting the dual cultures was extremely cumbersome, because one could not just cut and dry the crop, but one had to sort one crop of grain from another of vegetables.

I became interested in when not quite convinced of the method; so I installed on the windowsill of my dressing room in Grunewald rows of flower pots with seeds, which had different amounts of extracts and compost added to them. No measurable differences between growths after different treatments were ever established. But my interest remained, and I thought of combining the good and reasonable features of the biologic-dynamic method of fertlization with established farming methods on my American farm many years later. Wäuchen's influence stayed with me a life long.

Wäuchen and we drifted apart. He stayed longer and longer away from our house, and nobody knew where he was. He could not even be reached any longer at the (Sun-Yat-Sen) Chinese embassy in Berlin, where he had been employed as an attachee for many years. In 1935 I left home to go to boarding school in the Black Forest, far away; and in fall,when I came back for a vacation, he had completely disappeared. My mother divorced him in 1936, and he reverted, as I learned later, to his single, independent life. We had outgrown him, and he knew it, and we only much later got again in touch with him.

The first meeting after a long interval came after the end of the First World War in 1949. My wife Inge and I came to Sankt Georgenhof from Switzerland to visit my mother. She greeted us with the announcement that Wäuchen was on his way to visit the next day. To Inge my mother repeated several times:"You will like him. He is the most charming of men. But he is completely unsuitable for marriage". The meeting was pleasant, and we quoted for years thereafter my mother's announcement about the second husband, who should not have been married.

After that I have seen Wäuchen occasionally until his death in the 1960s. He was always eager to meet me, talk about old times and new ventures, and he stayed very friendly to the end of his life. All meetings had something strange about them. I recall one occasion, when I met him in the Chinese embassy in Berlin. When he left Grunewald, he had taken without asking several of my favorite books, some of which I had inherited from my greatgrandmother in Bordeaux. I identified the books in his office, and he gave them without hesitation back to me. As always, he had remained generous in giving as in taking.

I saw him the last time on a visit, when I came to Europe from the United States. He had sent me an invitation to come and see him in his house in Bavaria. He lived at that time,- and probably owned,- a lovely 18th century square building and some land, probably a former summer residence of the wealthy bishops of close-by Salzburg. While the house in its simplicity with just enough baroque ornaments to make it interesting was elegant to look at, it lacked all modern conveniences like running water and water closets. He had obviously taken great trouble to prepare the guest room for me, a large, square room with white walls and a heavy carved oak door into the upper hall. Wäuchen apologized for the sheets on the bed, which "were not freshly laundered, but had only once been used by his friend, the prince Solms." On closer inspection one could see, that prince Solms had either been very dirty when he slept there, or he had stayed many weeks: the sheets had a greenish tinge and large stains. I tried to sleep around the stains. The sheets of prince Solms became a joke in our house.

During the visit he gave me a large oil painting, an impressionist landscape, which according to his story my grandparents had given him as a present. He had kept it for me. He also announced that he had left the house and land to me in his testament. I asked him not to do this, because I lived so far away and had no use for it. After that I never heard what exactly happened to the house. As always with him, truth was intermingled inseparably with imagination and good-will.

A little book was published, which a cousin sent me. It contained the essence of Wäuchen's stories about East Asia without the elaborations, which we so fondly remembered.- I reprinted at the beginning of this chapter his last letter. It was the last witty and friendly outreach to me, whom he probably regarded as a son.

Arbeitsdienst (Labour Service)

When we grew up we learned from our elders that Germany had always had a compulsory military service: every able-bodied young man had to serve his country for at least a year. Only when I came to the United States did I learn that this was not always so everywhere. In the treaty of Versailles at the end of the First World War the victorious allies had stipulated that the German military had to be reduced to 100,000 men, all professionals, and there would no longer be a general compulsory military service. Hitler, who used the Versailles treaty as a specific target for his cricism, reintroduced soon after his assumption of office as German chancellor in the 1930s one-year compulsory military service for all able-bodied men. Shortly thereafter he added half a year of labour service, which had to precede the military year.

Just after I had served half-a-year in the labour service in the summer of 1937 and one year in the military, another year of military service was added, so that I had to serve all-in-all 2 1/2 years, from spring 1937 to fall of 1939. At that time I would have been able to start my studies, if the Second World War had not begun on September 1, 1939. Consequently I served my country for 2 1/2 years in peace and directly afterwards for 5 1/2 years during the war,- until it ended. These 8 years were a long interruption in the normal social process of growing up, and I still feel that I miss the time. However, 50 years later it looks not quite as long any more as it did then.

At the end of high school I passed the Abitur examination; thereafter I had an option: I could either volunteer for immediate service, which had the advantage that I could select the unit in I which I wanted to serve and get it over with before I would start at the university, - or I could wait until I was drafted,- probably several years later. I had a strong preference for the first option, and so I started, directly after I had finished school at the Birklehof in the Black Forest, my half year of labour service. The purpose of the service was not only the improvement of barren lands through our efforts, it was also meant to provide an opportunity for political indoctrination of young people. The labour service had its own uniforms,- brown rather than the military grey,- and its own hierarchy of commanders with special titles like: labour leader, upper labour leader, general labour leader and so forth.

In due time I received orders to report to a labor camp in lower Silesia, East of Berlin, about one hour's drive from Breslau; the camp was named Bartnig. It was a radical change of life style and conversational tone, from a rather select private,liberal school in the mountainous section of the Black Forest in Southern Germany with very few pupils (we were about 75 in the whole school) to the hundreds of young men in the camp, who constituted a cross section of the German population. Men with high school diplomas were in the minority, and many came from rural areas and from the region of the Upper Silesia mines, where many were illiterate, little German was spoken, and whole families lived in one room together.

The camp was located far away from any town or village, in flat country. There were many swamps and lakes, which we were supposed to eliminate or drain. It was an outpost of one of the large Silesian estates (Vorwerk) with one small house, called castle, in which the administrator had lived. Stables and barns lay around a large courtyard with buildings, in which agricultural workers lived under unbelievably poor conditions. Cattle stood in stables and there were large barns. Though we had nothing directly to do with the farm, I remember once visiting a field-labourers' family in order to give some assistance: I found the parents and 9 children in one room, all sitting together on two or three beds, and there was no other furniture in the one-room apartment.

Our leaders lived in the "castle", while we stayed in barracks, which had been newly constructed. The barracks stood in a square around a large courtyard. Each room housed one unit consisting of around twenty men. The beds were in two stories, and the mattresses were filled with straw. Everythings was immaculately clean, and we spent a great deal of time every day to keep it that way. We were regularly inspected, not only for cleanliness but also whether beds were properly made.

The owners of the estate lived nearby in a small castle, and we had no contact with them. Sometimes we saw the mistress, a titled widow, walk accross the fields in high boots and very simple attire, looking not very different from her labourers.

Even on this for East German standards small property one could observe an enormous difference in possessions, power and social status between the land owners and the agricultural laborers. In general, as one went from West to East in Germany (and in Europe in general), these differences became more pronounced. In Russia, in the extreme East, they had led to the Bolschewist revolution; we saw the differences first hand in Bartnig and surroundings.

Later on in this year I had an opportunity to visit a place, where an extreme example of accumulated wealth and power existed by one of the very large landowners. The owners were a young couple who lived by themselves with many servants in a huge castle, which they had inherited. Next to the castle I observed a 3-story building, which housed nothing but the offices of the numerous administrators of the estate, as was explained to me. The place and the owners are now gone, and I heard that the couple escaped to the West as the Russians approached at the end of the Second World War, leaving most of their possessions behind.

Later I will tell about my visit there. At this time (1989) the then young husband has become a successful architect in West Germany, and he lives with wife and children happily in an apartment. One cannot help wondering whether his life has become more satisfying thanks to the reduced circumstances, than it would have been if the feudal system had persisted.

With the exception of short intervals, the 6 months of labour service have by now become an unpleasant memory. Compared with the subsequent military service it seemed improvisational, unnecessary, and highly political; there were no tried rules and life-style, and most of the time we were ordered around on useless errands by shouting fools. Our work consisted of shovelling by hand deep trenches; we reinforced the sides with faggots, which were bundled together. The trenches were obviously meant to drain swampy areas,- but that was never explained to us. One had the distinct impression that we were meant to be kept busy, rather than were doing something useful. Whether the disappearance of the beautiful swamps and ponds really led to the emergence of large new fields, I do not know. The idea was probably copied from Mussolini in Italy, who had drained the Pontinian swamps near Rome. Naturally, the shortage of agricultural land, and in general of space, was one of Hitler's special complaints; he accused the victorious countries of having neglected German needs at the end of the First World War in the treaty of Versailles. I wonder whether our efforts ever added much agricultural land to the econmy of East Germany!

The work itself was strenuous and boring. It proved helpful to me that I had done a lot of digging and had moved earth at my last school. There we built a new sportsfield on a slope of mountainous country by moving earth on trolleys from the upper to the lower end of a slope. We had spent several hours a day with manual labour.

Another valuable experience had been gained at the same school with manual labour, when I was apprenticed to the schoemaker in the village of Hinterzarten. Highschool pupils had a choice of working with one of the local craftsmen, and most opted for carpentry in a village shop. Mister Huck, the shoemaker master, had only three volunteers, among them a West German prince and myself. We spent several afternoons a week repairing shoes, which had been deposited by customers. And at the end of our time there we experienced the glory of producing something ourselves; this was in my case a pair of open sandals with crepe soles. I had to prepare my own pitch-thread, make holes in the leather, and sow layers of soles together. It had been a wise decision by the founder of the school, Kurt Hahn, to introduce this program of apprenticeship to men experienced in handicrafts. Consequently I was better prepared than many former highschool students for the long hours of manual labour. The drawback in the labour service lay only in the nature of the project in Bartnig.

The digging, to which we marched every day along dusty country roads, singing aggressive songs, occupied only half the day in the labour service. Much of the rest of the day was occupied with pseudomilitary exercises. We stood in long, straight lines, received orders shouted at the top of the leader's voice to shoulder the spades, and went in general through a number of movements, where timing and precision were the most important factors. I always imagined that all this shouldering, presenting and special holding of the spades had just been invented by some eager official. There were roll calls, inspections of rooms and dress, marching to meals and much more.

As everywhere under disciplinary pressure and tyranny, men had a second, secret life. Friendships were formed among people of similar opinions and backgrounds, and we sometimes talked through most of the night. Men grew or broke down under the pressure.

I remember very well the friendship with a young man my age; he was also from Berlin, and he had also just finished highschool. He confided to me that his father was pretty crazy,-a little reminiscent of my father; he bore the title of imperial count (Reichsgraf), and the son had just read in the paper that he had married the sixth time. My friend's latest stepmother was an Egyptian princess named Fatima, while his mother's maiden name was Bismarck. The mother was as far as I remember a granddaughter of the former German chancellor prince Otto von Bismarck.

The young man's best friend in Berlin had been a boy called Bleichroeder, who was the descendant of a distinguished German-Jewish banking family. My friend had relatives and friends in the Silesian landowning aristocracy, and he was looking for a coconspirator to accompany him on visits to these on free weekends. I agreed to come with him whenever possible, and this gave me another opportunity to go back and forth between 2 worlds, that of the politicized labour service and that of the old-established, slightly decadent big landowners. This was also an opportunity to leave our miserable existence temporarily behind us. One such excursion remains lively in my memory until today.

On that particular day Otto Magnus (the first name of my friend) had "organized" (as we called illegal secret pursuits) a motorbike. This was hidden near the camp in a barn. On Sunday morning we mounted the bike together and clattered away to the next small town called Militsch. In that town was the castle of the friends located, whose name was counts Maltzahn.

We drove into a park which surrounded a huge castle. Recently I saw a photograph of the castle in a countess Maltzahn's memoirs, and I was reassured that it was really as grand as I remember. In the center rose a cupola, which formed the roof of the large dining room, were the Maltzahn couple dined every day in state.- Our motorbike was hidden in the shrubbery, and we went to one of the back doors, where a butler was already waiting for us. He recognized my friend from former visits, and he had already prepared a most welcome hot bath and laid out clean and elegant clothes. We donned the formal suits in preparation of a meal in the huge dining room.

We were four for midday dinner, all under 25 years of age, and we sat on four sides of a round table in the middle of the room, a servant waiting behind each chair. The young couple,- our hosts,- had just had their first baby. She was 19 years old, he, the heir, a few years older. Somehow the idea that so young a couple were the sole owners of the vast estate, directing a small army of servants and administrators, seemed absurd to me.

We had a delicious meal, well entertained by the young couple. They made an effort to cheer us up, and to make the stay enjoyable. After dinner we went to a small room, far away from the dining room, in the upper regions of the castle, where they had comfortable, modern furniture and a grammophone with a large collection of records. We were told that they spent much of their time together in this room, away from the state rooms, a kind of flight from the inherited splendour. I seem to remember that he told us, that he drove race cars as a hobby, and that she just had had the first baby. As mentioned before, 45 years later I learnt about a couple of the same name, who had become well-known architects in postwar West-Germany.

In the early evening we said goodbye, changed back into our brown uniforms with assistance from the butler, and we puttered back to the camp in the falling night. Our straw mattresses seemed to be more bearable now, as we remembered the good company and beautiful surroundings of the earlier day.

Similar excursions were made by my friend Otto Magnus with or without me. I saw his perfumed invitations on coloured stationary and read illustrious names. He met many people with famous ancestors, frequently from the old Zsarist society; and Sunday night he or both of us switched back to the other life. This was the last time that the kind of fairy tale life went on in German Silesia; the end of the war destroyed it all: families fled and castles were destroyed.

After the end of the labour service, Otto Magnus and I came to different military units, and we lost contact. When I did no longer hear from him, I assumed that he had been killed in the war like most of my contemporaries. Recently a friend of mine looked up his name in the new edition of the Almanach of Gotha, where the lives of the German aristocracy are faithfully recorded. I learned that he had survived the war, had gotten married, and he had died only a few years before this was written. I can still hear in my imagination the ringing laughter of a truly friendly person and a kind friend, and the world is poorer without him.

The life in the labour service was probably the first time, that I experienced something which was later on frequently repeated: namely a double existence. It made me think about possible injustices in human society, and how separate human conditions could exist side by side. Frequently both worlds were understandable and good, none better than the other, but just different possibilities of order and distribution of possessions. Though some such worlds exist close to each other, people in one would hardly be aware of the existence of the other.

On a weekend in the middle of summer 1937 we were told that there would be three free days, during which time we could leave the camp and go whereever we wanted. I told my mother that on the telephone, and she quickly travelled to Breslau, the only big city between Berlin and Bartnig. From there she came by taxi to the camp to pick me up, and we drove together to Breslau. There in her hotel I enjoyed some of the long missed luxuries like a hot bath and good meals elegantly served. Together we used the long weekend to explore the beauties of Breslau. In the center of the city lay the Dominsel (cathedral island), where high catholic clerics lived in a close to medieval setting next to the large church. The only noises on the island were the ringing of bells, which summoned the priests and churchgoers to mass. It seemed like a long lost world, far away from the bustle of modern life.

I understand that the old buildings have been destroyed during the Second World War, and that the city has become Polish and has changed its name. Whether any of the historic buildings were reconstructed later I do not know. At that time I strongly felt the difference between the busy labour camp and the quiet island. It was not difficult for me to switch from one to the other, but I felt a strong preference for the latter.

This is the place to discuss some thoughts about the old feudal class society, in which I spent much of my youth, and its' opposite, modern democratic lifestyle. I feel that the old order, which was already dying when I was young, and which was particularly prominent in the East of Europe, is now frequently maligned and misunderstood.

Naturally I experienced it from the priviledged side. In Grunewald my mother, father or stepfather, and four children lived in the house and outbuildings together with more than 10 servants. My grandparents with three grandchildren lived in their much larger home with about 20 servants, and numerous employees like garden helpers who came every morning and left at night. All these peoiple formed together one household, in which the rights and duties were clearly delineated for everyone. I remember that much of the conversation of my mother and her husband at the breakfast table was concerned with what was generally called "servant problems", and as an attentive child I found that rather annoying. However, it was also a sign of real concern about the welfare of the people who looked after house, garden and family.

My greatgreatgrandmother Marianne had created a home and foundation, which took care of old family servants. As I remember it, every servant who had served faithfully for many years had a choice, when he or she reached old age, to either receive one sum of money for a house, or be cared for in the Mariannenstift. As children we made jokes, when we saw family pictures on the walls of the retirement home, because we had the impression that rather praying than to

the saints, the old servants "prayed" to their former masters. There was definitely knowledge and discussion about who had or would marry whom and who the children were.

It all seems now rather out of proportion and rather embarrassing. But there was one predominant impression, which I always had: people then were born into an environment, a profession and a "station", from which there was hardly an escape. I believe that this took many of the insecurity out of life, which is now created through the decisive role which achievement of each individual plays in modern American society. I am personally strongly on the side of reward for achievement and against the innate station in life. But I still sometimes hanker for the seemingly much more relaxed society in which I grew up. It just was not as unpleasant and degrading as it sometimes now appears.

The six months in the labour service remain in my memory as a messy and frequently hard time, which was interrupted by light and enjoyable moments,- these mostly outside the regular service time. It was for me probably a rather radical way of making me grow up and learn about much of the "real world".

My Adventures in Mental Health.

Mental patients- people who show behavior so unacceptable that they cannot fend for themselves in society- (the law defines them as "a danger to themselves and others")- can be treated in two ways: there are the chemical-surgical methods, which are based on materialistic considerations of body chemistry and structure; and there are psychological procedures, which vary, but are not limited to, psychological analysis and persuasion, or care and protection in specially designed surroundings.

My research has always been concerned with chemical therapy of behavior: in the course of my working years great progress has been made in the design of new drugs, which can change mood, behavior, and thinking. For most new drugs a wrong claim has been made, that they can alter behavior for long periods of time or forever. Drug treatment can only temporarily suppress a symptom like hyperactivity, a despondent mood, or hallucinations. Permanent cures, which outlast the excretion of the drug from the body, have not yet been discovered.

I remember an enthusiastic headline during the Second World War, which claimed that one had discovered "optimism in the form of tablets". The drug dextro-amphetamine, for which that claim was made, is nowadays known as speed and is ranked under addiction-causing-substances.- There is symptomatic treatment, but there is no chemical cure for mental diseases.

Before chemicals became so important in the treatment of mental patients, one concentrated on putting "madmen" into protective surroundings. These were first called madhouses, and later mental hospitals. In these places patients could spend their entire lives in locked wards. Society would now be protected from them, and they could live relatively peacefully as long as it was deemed necessary. This system of custodial care, into which money, land, manpower etc. had been invested, began to be abandoned; it had frequently to yield to physical treatments which could be applied at home. This change happened in the 1970s,- the years in which I worked for the mental health department of North Carolina.

The report which follows is meant to shed some light on the changes as I experienced them. I tell anecdotes which are meant to highlight some of the problems which arose during the change. I do not compare different treatments, nor do I judge them. In the following the subject matter is covered from a personal point of view, neither comprehensively nor objectively.

Psychiatry, psychology, human and animal behavior and mental health and disease have always had special interest for me. I was brought up in the knowledge that my greatgrandfather Carl Westphal had been one of the leading German professors of psychiatry and neurology, and I enjoyed sometimes the company of his son, Alexander Westphal, who was professor of psychiatry in Bonn. When I was drawn and somewhat pushed into pharmacology,- the study of drug effects on living organisms,- I preferred to explore what drugs did to the behavior of whole animals, rather than study the type of drug which affected an organ like liver or kidney or the body's metabolism. The problem which has really fascinated me throughout my whole adult life is the way in which men and intact animals function under normal circumstances, under extraordinary circumstances like extreme stress, and what happens when drugs, genetic abnormalities, or diseases change behavior in specific ways. Can one describe such changes? Can one predict specific malfunctions? Can one possibly change them or bring them back to normal?

My thesis work in Tübingen in 1945/6 was about changes in the blood, which occurred as the consequence of the injection of certain chemicals; the topic had been selected by my thesis advisor, Dr. Jung, who planned it as part of a larger study of blood abnormalities. After that I had the first chance to pursue interests of my own. My first effort was rather simple-minded: I compared the effects of one poison on the behavior of widely diverse animals from cats to worms. There were so many different circumstances which varied from species to species,- like absorption through the skin (or exoskeleton) and distribution in the body through an open (insect) or closed (mammal) circulation,- that the drug effects were more dependent on these than on the behaviors. Different animals behaved so differently, that comparison seemed rather hopeless. I was able to make only minor contributions to comparative pharmacology between 1945 and 1949; beyond shedding some light on the undesirable actions of insecticides like DDT, I achieved little.

At the end of that period of I discovered accidentally the measurable changes, which drugs brought about in the web-building behavior of spiders. This is described elsewhere (in the chapter on Science/Research). The discovery is only of interest here because it illustrates a step in the development of my behavioral research, and its connection with drugs.

During the years in the pharmacology departments of the Universities of Bern in Switzerland, Harvard in Boston, and the State University of New York in Syracuse I preferred to share my interest with psychiatrists and psychologists; my special friends were professor Hans Heimann, psychiatrist in Tübingen, professor Charles Reed, psychologist at Temple in Philadelphia and I communicated with several others like professor Hans Peters, an animal behaviorist in Tübingen, Monika Meyer-Holzapfel from the zoo in Bern, Peter Klopfer from zoology in Durham and the well-known Doctors Skinner, Lorenz and Levy. However, a big change occurred when I accepted the position of Director of Mental Health Research with the state government in North Carolina.

At that time I felt that a change from my position in the pharmacology department in Syracuse was necessary for my advancement, and I advertised anonymously in the magazine Science for a leading position in drug and behavior research in or near a university. I received more than 60 replies. Among others I was considered for the directorship of the San Diego Zoo, but was found not sufficiently experienced in fund raising. In North Carolina the progressive Commissioner of Mental Health had postulated, that the patient services could only be upgraded, if they were closely aligned with teaching and research. After a few meetings I was offered the position of Director of Research, and I accepted. There was no precedent of how such a job should be handled, and I liked the challenge of building something new.

I began to be a full member of a management team, which tried to provide mental health care to thousands of "patients",- or as one began to call them "clients",- in an American State with a number of inhabitants comparable to those of all Switzerland. Suddenly I was employed for the express purpose of investigating- and supervising investigations of others- into mental health and disease.

Direction was given by Dr. Eugene Hargrove, a former professor of psychiatry at the Medical School of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Around 1960 he had been appointed the first commissioner of mental health in North Carolina. He took charge of 4 huge mental hospitals, which were located in different parts of the state, each with more than 1,000 patients and hundreds of employees (and thousans of acres of land); of three and later four centers for the retarded; he founded drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers and community mental health centers, where those patients would be helped, which could live outside the hospitals.

All this was mainly made possible through appropriations from the North Carolina legislature, where an influential member, Mr. John Umstead, lobbied for mental health funds. Large budget appropriations enabled Dr. Hargrove to carry out reforms, and he quickly organized efforts to extend the department's influence in the state government.

There were many areas of government concern which could be designated to different departments; under Mr. Umstead's guidance, and with Dr. Hargrove's help, many of these- like drug treatment, mental retardation, alcoholism- were assigned to the mental health department. When I arrived in 1966, the mental health department had become the second largest section of state government in North Carolina; this was measured in number of employees and size of funds appropriated. Only highways surpassed mental health.

My special role in the mental health department was based on an idea of Dr. Hargrove's, which appeared to me most enlightened; this has now- over 20 years later- been abandoned. He postulated that the best way to improve patient services and attract good personnel was through the placement of teaching and research physically close to the service providers. Aides, nurses, psychologists and physicians had worked far away from university departments, even in other towns. One way to achieve proximity was to locate a division of research in the mental health departmnen; I was put in charge of that division in 1966.

Research topics were selected by me according to quality rather than expediency, so that the best effect was achieved. The quality was guaranteed by carefully selected full-time research scientists, which the department hired. The laboratories and offices became part of the existing institutions. Headquarters moved into Anderson Hall, a three-story building on the Raleigh campus of Dorothea Dix Hospital. In addition to their research, the scientists acted as advisors and consultants to all parts of the system. The hospital campus comprised more tha 1,000 acres of land and many buildings, all located close to the center of the capital city. At the time the town was laid out, a pie-shaped piece had been set aside for the hospital; this adjoined the state university campus. We could see the central government buildings from the hospital grounds.

Originally these tracts of land, as for instance 10,000 acres for the John Umstead mental hospital in Butner,N.C., were intended to provide living and activity areas for more than 1,000 patients, and they had agricultural and other patient support functions. They were also buffer zones, which protected the rest of the population from too close contact with the "madmen and-women". The same setup had been used in Europe, and was familiar to me from earlier days, when my greatgrandfather Carl Wetsphal, my greatuncle Alexander Westphal, my friend Hans Heimann and others had each been in charge or worked in such settings. The mental hospitals were known by their beautiful flower beds and park

which were kept immaculate through patient labor.

Dorothea Dix hospital in Raleigh had, like its European counterparts, which I had seen in Bern, Zürich, Bonn, Lausanne and Berlin, beautifully kept, parklike grounds with rolling hills, huge old oak trees, flowering shrubs and well-kept flower beds. In addition to many patient buildings, there were large stables and barns, pasture for cattle and fields with grain, and ponds with recreational facilities. Everythings served directly or indirectly the welfare of the state's mental patients. The change in mental health care, which stressed the patients' rights at the expense of compassion, which I will describe, began with designating these great places as "patient warehouses".

Many patients, who resided in this as in other such stately places, had spent many years there, frequently forgotten by or out of touch with their families. They lived in large wards, locked in for most of the day, and there were no knobs on the doors. The ones I met felt at home here, and many knew no other home. When they were informed of their rights, and an advocacy system was introduced, to many outsiders' surprise there were more complaints about being unjustly dismissed from the hospital, than about being kept confined against their will.

Together with the new rules, which were introduced in the 1970s, a patient advocacy system was started. Every patient who appeared dissatisfied with the hospital could ask for the free assistance of an advocate, who had to speak up for him and see to it, that he or she could channel the complaint in the most effective way. I was enthusiastic about the new system, which was based among others on the reasoning of my old acquaintance Thomas Szasz in his book "The Myth of Mental Illness". As a scientist who had had some training in psychiatry, who maintained an office and laboratories on the hospital grounds, and who was interested in helping to find the best living and care conditions for each mental patient, I volunteered to function as a patient advocate. This brought me into close contact with the "clients",- as patients were to be called now,- and it provided me with many opportunities to observe living conditions in the hospital.

The following event, which remains clearly in my memory, sheds some light on the true situation, which was so much in contrast with the imaginary human cruelty, about which we began to read. It occurred at Dorathea Dix hospital in Raleigh, and it probably occurred in a similar way in many other hospitals at that time.

I visited frequently one particular large back ward, where a great number of chronic and "incurable" female patients lived together in a suite of long rooms. There were rows of beds, which were always neatly made during the day, and the locked-in patients sat on or between beds, some lay on the floor, immobile or restless, depending on the nature of their troubles and the mood of the day. Soon I began to know a few of the more alert ladies, and they began to recognize me. So it did not upset me much when one day I found myself locked in by mistake. I saw no other door or any way to get out without the help from the personnel, none of whom was in sight, and I resigned myself to staying inside, maybe for a few hours.

After a short time an old lady, whom I had seen several times before, and with whom I had talked, recognized me and came close. She asked whether I wanted to leave. I explained to her my predicament, and she volunteered to help me, under the condition that I would not tell anybody from the nursing personnel about it. After she had received my assurances, she took me by the hand and pulled me through a small side door, which I had not noticed before. As I recall it, we two sneaked together through a number of underground passages, opening and closing inconspicuous doors, until I found myself suddenly on the lawn in the back of the building. Now I could walk easily back to my office. The lady-guide waved, bid good-bye, and vanished back into the building. I found out later that she had returned back into her "locked-up" ward, where her absence had not been noted.

This showed me the intricate structure of the old building, which had been added on and changed many times over the years. But it revealed another surprising fact: the patients knew, and presumably had shared that knowledge for many years, that they could escape whenever necessary. But they felt no need to use the escape as long as they had the feeling that the hospital was their home, nor did they let on that they knew.

As mentioned before, much of the reforms were the consequence of ideas put forth in a book written by a psychiatrist, whom I knew from my time in Syracuse,N.Y., namely Dr. Thomas Szasz. His bestseller was entitled "The Myth of Mental Illness". In this he argued among others that there is no such thing as a definable mental "disease", and that most of our behavior toward mental patients had been created by society and its conventions and in turn created patients. The inmates of hospitals, for instance, could just be regarded as normal individuals and could be treated accordingly, and they would behave "normal". This is not the place to take sides in the argument for or against his ideas, nor will I elaborate on the contrast between a teaching which looked superficially humane and liberal, while its creator was in my eyes a cruel and selfish person. My memory retains many events which occurred as a

Consequence of the reform movement in mental health, which took place in the 1970s, and which illustrate my point.

As mentioned earlier, the old hospitals were whole worlds in themselves, with gardens, farms, shops for carpentry or metal work, where patients could labor under supervision. One employee at Dorothea Dix Hospital had started a gardening shop, which was located in an abandoned building. Here patients could under supervision of the enterprising employee grow and propagate house plants, which were later sold or used to decorate hospital rooms. I had the opportunity to watch inmates, who had little contact with the outside, spend hours mixing soil, transplanting seedlings, watering and tending plants lovingly. This place is now closed down, after it had always been felt as an embarrassment to the new "streamlined' hospital administration.

There was also the large farm, where milk and beef cattle was bred and tended in cooperation with the animal husbandry department of the North Caroolina State University across the street. The products, milk and meat, were used to add something extra to the hospital diet of the more than one thousand patients. I learned about this operation much more, when I was called in as an advocate for a patient who complained bitterly. For nearly 30 years he had every morning after breakfast walked across from the patient building, where he spent his nights, to the stables of the cows. There he participated briefly in milking, but mainly in cleaning out the stables. He had shoveled cow manure onto wheelbarrows and carted it to large manure piles; than he had distributed fresh straw around the large, always clean Hollstein cows. The work was familiar to me from my military days (see Military Service), and I could understand that he enjoyed doing it. The reason for his complaint was, that he had suddenly been told that his services were no longer needed. From now on he had to stay inside his ward all day and night, only to be let out briefly into a fenced courtyard for measured exercise. He regarded this as severe punishment and suspected, that his work had no longer been found satisfactory.

My investigation soon resulted in clarification: according to the new rules, which were designed to protect patients' rights, every bit of work performed by inmates had to be remunerated. The patient had to be treated as a hired professional, as it was done in the outside economy. The old gentleman, who had cleaned the stables for so many years, had received up to that time about 25 to 50 cents a week as pocket money. He had bought with this extra cigarettes or candy. He now had the right to receive a comparatively large pay for a full work-week, for which there was no money in the budget. The simple solution was to discontinue the old arrangement,- and later to abandon the whole farm operation. The land was now of no more use, and it could be sold by the

state to private developers, and part given to the university. This was done, and the money gained was used for everything but improvement of mental health care.

Nobody seems to have considered the old gentleman's happines, which depended on his life style. His rights were interpreted in the narrowest possible manner. He had become one of many victims of the implementation of the new patients' rights. These rights had looked to me so promising when I became an advocate; and now they began to lose much of their glitter.

On a larger scale the big hospital was a looser now, together with similar institutions. The agriculture, gardening and shop operations were closed down, the lands and many of the buildings were put to other use, and patients were dismissed, allegedly to be returned to the care of their community, but frequently to get lost in the city streets. The official interpretation was, that people with deviant behavior would profit more from living around others with "normal" behavior, than they could profit from their previous isolation. The normally functioning community would help them to function better in society. One case became a scandal, where the state of North Carolina had provided a dismissed patient with a ticket to California, to get him away from their care.

It struck me as particularly dangerous for proper mental health care, how personal greed and lust for money and power gained advantages from the consequences of new attitudes in mental health care. The large land area, which had been the hospital's for about 100 years, formed a pie-shaped piece, which reached with its tip close to the center of the city. As the city grew, the land became increasingly valuable and desirable for business and residential development. The land also formed a traffic impediment between adjoining city sections. When mental health support in the legislature diminished, through the death of the all-poweful legislator John Umstead and the political change from democratic to republican governorship, the long-time commissioner of mental health was dismissed; a governor, at the end of his term, signed a document which shrank hospital land to a fraction of its former size. No strong voices were raised for the welfare of the patient-inhabitants.

The plan of replacing hospital care with life in the community was only partially implemented. It proved much more costly than anticipated, and as hospital funds were never properly transferred, the new programs became quite insufficient. There were also the persons which had lost in the long years in the hospital all ties to the place of their origin, and they were not made welcome there any longer. An old lady, who had lived for years in the hospital and made a little extra money by selling what she knitted, requested my help in preventing her dismissal. She could not afford to live outside, where she also would have been lost without the accustomed shelter.

There were incidents of a more humorous nature, which were a consequence of the implementation of patients' rights, and for which I was called in. One such case kept me busy as advocate for many months, and the person involved stayed grateful to me for years afterwards. Whenever afterwards I had lunch in the hospital cafeteria, there was some likelyhood that a neatly dressed middle-aged gentlemen would come up to the table and greet me in a particularly friendly manner. Friends who sat at the table with me would inquire who he was. My answer mentioned the fact that he had murdered his wife many years ago, but he was now, thanks to my assistance, free and well respected.

The story begins with a call from hospital authorities to my office with the request to act as an advocate for a patient, whom I will call Mr.X. I agreed, and met him shortly thereafter, and learned from him about the preceding events. His records confirmed what he told me. Mr. X had actually killed his wife,- as I recall about 10 years previously,- and he had made a full confession in court. His wife's parents took his two children in and began to persecute him out of revenge. He was found guilty, but the court decided that he was not mentally competent to understand what he had done and did not to have stand trial. He was committed to a special closed ward in Dorothea Dix hospital. As he proved to be a friendly, gregarious and reliable fellow, he was after some time frequently allowed to leave the hospital temporarily, and before long Mr. X had a job in the city of Raleigh. He was let out every morning to go to work, and he returned without fail in the evening for supper in the hospital,- was locked into his ward for the night. For all practical purposes he had received free room and board in the hospital and money from his employer.

At the time I was called in, he had been found well enough to be released. He qualified for complete freedom, as he had never been convicted of murder. His diligent work over the years had resulted in the accumulation of substantial amounts of money,- as I recall around $ 10,000.-. In addition he owned now a relatively expensive, new car, which he used to drive to and from work. The problem consisted in a large bill, which the alert hospital administration had presented to him for all the past years, comparable to a hotel bill for all the time, and which had to be settled before the release could take place.

I procured a lawyer for him, who advised him against payment of the bill. He had entered the hospital against his will and without consent, on a court order. At the time he had entered, the cost of hospitalization was to be borne by the state. Also the comparison between the hospital accomodation and patient food and a Holiday Inn, which had been used for calculation of his debt, seemed absurd. He could not be released, in the eyes of the administration, before he had settled his bill. And he would not pay as far as he was concerned.

I felt myself to be strongly on his side, and I began to negotiate a settlement. It was to our advantage, that at the time the new rules had been laid down, a provision had been added, that payment could be waved if special conditions prevailed. The admission of Mr. X against his free will, and the amount of time which had elapsed since, seemed in favor of invoking such special conditions. A settlment was reached, which was satisfactory to both parties, a very much reduced payment was made, and the hospital inmate was released. I earned his gratitude through negotiating the settlement in this strange case. As far as I know he became a model citizen, who never left Raleigh; but he rarely saw his children, who were raised in hate by his wife's parents.

This was only one of many instances, where a mental patient could not be released, -or his release was much delayed,- because he or she could not pay the bill. I do not know where the money went, which was gained through these payments, but it was likely added to the state's general fund, which did not directly benefit patients. As from the distribution of hospital land, other agemncies and other budget categories profited from such payments; these payments were the final result of the introduction of "patients' rights" into mental health management. For me it was an illustration of how greed and power struggle behind the scenes determined the effects of the new approach. Patients were now treated as responsible and financially independent citizens, rather than as wards of the rest of the population. In the end I had difficulty in discerning an improvement for our patients,- now called clients,- after they had been given their rights. Maybe there were good original intentions; but the results were frequently cruel and sometimes, as told here, absurd. It confirmed my opinion that compassion and kindness are more important than rights!