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NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Change in Leadership. Having presided with great distinction for the past 15 years as head of the Vereins Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, Otto Amann, the former mayor of Hohenems, has announced his retirement from this position. Without diminishing the importance of others in the initial planning and creation and success of the Museum, it must be said that it was Dipl.Ing. Otto Amann, who developed the idea of a Jewish Museum in Hohenems and who persevered to make it happen. As a special gift on behalf of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, Stephan Rollin, has commissioned a portrait of Otto Amann, which he will be presenting to the Museum as this Newsletter goes to press.

The new president of the Vereins Jüdisches Museum Hohenems is Dr. Eva Häfele. She has been active in the Museum's work over the past three years. Her interest in cultural and historical matters should serve the Museum well. Her enthusiasm and interest were evident to the Rosenthal descendants who attended the opening of the current exhibit. We wish her well, and hope that we can assist in her work.

Exhibits. The exhibit presently on display at the Museum is about the family Rosenthal and is entitled "The Rosenthals, A Collage of a Family." The Museum foresees other exhibits in the future about other families who have lived in Hohenems. As is evident from the present exhibit, the Museum is interested not only in the former residents of Hohenems, but also in their descendants. The Museum has asked AFJMH to inquire if you have some document or photograph about your family, its life in Hohenems, or its life since that time, including the present, please consider sending copies (or originals, if you wish) to them.

The ancestors of the Rosenthal family first settled in Hohenems in the beginning of the 18th century. Two descendants of these emigrants, the brothers Philipp and Josef formed the textile firm Gebrüder Rosenthal. Over the years, most of their descendants left Hohenems for various parts of the world. However, one descendant Claire Heyman, born Klara Rosenthal, returned to Hohenems. Her return ended in tragedy. The Museum has been fortunate that Klara's granddaughter, Jacqueline, who lives in Brussels, retained and contributed ten postcards written in French between 1939 and 1942 during Claire's last days in Hohenems and while she was in Vienna, where she was forcibly sent from Hohenems. The postcards end when Klara was deported to Theresienstadt, where she was murdered.

Claire Heyman wrote these postcards in, what to this writer, seems to be code, describing the limitations put upon her life in Hohenems, her forced move to Vienna, and her life there. Much is left to the imagination, but no matter who reads the postcards, this much is clear--tragedy has overtaken Claire Heyman. This writer could only read the postcards and weep. When first read, the postcards are sad beyond words. However, the events occurring at the time the postcards were written make their meaning even clearer, and the Museum's exhibit sets the postcards into historical context. Claire Heyman's courage becomes evident and beyond belief. Without Jacqueline Heyman's assistance,

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these postcards would be lost to all of us. Everyone should read Aline Steiner's letter to Jacqueline after Ms Steiner first received the postcards. We are grateful to them for bringing this horrible period to life in a meaningful and respectful manner.

Aline Steiner has created a powerful theatre piece based on the postcards. The piece entitled "Mes Chers-Meines Lieben" not only tells the story of each postcard, but also puts the postcards into historical perspective. The postcards themselves form a significant centerpiece to the family exhibit, and are included in a fascinating catalog of the exhibition, available from the Museum.

On the evening of June 5, 2002, the Jewish Museum Hohenems opened the exhibit. Dr. Hans-Peter Bischof, the Cultural Minister of the province of Vorarlberg, officially opened the exhibit. Numerous other officials from Hohenems and the province of Vorarlberg attended. These included members of the Vorarlberg parliament, Dieter Egger and Monika Pircher, the past and first president of the Museum Verein and former mayor of Hohenems, Otto Amann, the Vice mayor of the city, Kurt Raos, the Kulturstadtrat, Kurt Fenkart, the President of the Cultural Committee of Hohenems, Alwera Collini, the President of the cemetery association and honorary member of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, Kurt Bollag, another honorary member, Erik Weltsch, Rabbi Schmelzer from St. Gallen and the owner of the old Rosenthal textile mill, Wilhelm Otten. Before the opening, the new president of the Museum Association, Eva Häfele, gave an introduction and Susan Rosenthal Shimer also spoke. A number of descendants attended, including Helene Amler and her husband, Robert Amler and his wife, Jacqueline Heyman, Felix Jaffe, Susan Shimer and her husband, and Monica Wollner and her husband,

Before the opening ceremony, the Rosenthal family members present were honored with the premier presentation of Mes Chers-Meines Lieben.

The Exhibition contains more than Claire Heyman's postcards. Family histories appear in photographs and paintings contributed by a number of descendants, including the Rollin, Amler, Berndt, Mintz, Wollner, Heyman and Shimer descendants. A family history written by the Berndt family of Chile is on display, as is an essay of the memories of Susan Rosenthal Shimer of New York. A video of an oral history provided by Stephan Rollin is set in a separate room for all to hear and see. Stephan is the president of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems and is the son of Paul Rosenthal, who in turn is the son of Arnold Rosenthal and the grandson of Josef Rosenthal. Stephan tells the story of his father's emigration to America. The story of that emigration is not simple and is well told both in the video and in the exhibit catalog. As reported in an earlier Newsletter, Paul Rosenthal changed his name to Rollin when he immigrated to America. His children, Stephan and Helene (known to many of us as Nini) spent most of the war years in Switzerland. Their own tales are largely untold, but they have contributed photographs to the exhibit, which help tell the Rosenthal Geschichte.

Claire Heyman's happier story is told through other documents. The Museum exhibit displays a number of photographs of Klara, obviously an elegant woman, and her family through the years. Others tell the story of the Klara they knew. The Museum's collage includes information about Klara's life in her house, which has become the Museum. Claire Heyman sold the house in 1936, but continued to live in it with the new owner, the Burtschers. Her relationship with the Burtschers was close and members of that family give us the benefit of their memories. Even before she shared the house with the Burtschers, Klara had as tenants the family of Waltraud Drexel, nee Waible. Photographs of that time are also in the exhibit.

The exhibit will continue until October 6. Special programs are planned. These include additional performances of Mes Chers-Meines Lieben, a talk by Stephan Rollin, and another by Edith Witzemann and Frau Hans Burtscher, each of whom have memories of the Rosenthals killed by the Nazis. Available at the Museum is a computer workstation where visitors can explore their ancestry and a library filled with books about the Rosenthals, their relations, Hohenems, Judaism in Austria, and even the smugglers who helped many escape from the Nazis. The Museum welcomes visitors to view the exhibit and take advantage of its wonderful resources.

A volume containing the material from the exhibit has been published and is available from the Museum. If you wish to purchase a copy, please contact the Museum staff. The Museum's E-mail address is office@jm-hohenems.at The Museum plans to publish a second volume containing material collected since the exhibit's opening.

FAMILY CHRONICLES

Some notes about Malwine Rosenthal and her descendants by Walter Mintz.

My great grandmother, Malwine Rosenthal, was born in what is now Hungary in 1858. Her parents, whose surname was Brüll, died when she was quite young and a wealthy family named Hatvan who had a large estate in a town called Hatvan not far from Budapest raised her. (The head of this family had been named Deutsch, but changed his name when he became a baron. In the 1980's, I visited the "Schloss" where he had lived; at the time of my visit, the "Schloss" housed a hospital.)

Malwine Brüll married Emil Rosenthal. (I believe this was an arranged marriage, which was not unusual for the time.) Emil had been born in Hohenems in 1848 and was one of eleven children of Josef Rosenthal. Emil became one of the top executives (Mitschef) of the Gebrüder Rosenthal firm that manufactured textiles in Hohenems and elsewhere. According to Dr. Tanzer's book, he was a hard working, conscientious, and talented businessman who deserved much of the credit for the success that the Rosenthal firm enjoyed in the latter part of the 19th century. I believe by the time he married Malwine he, like other members of the Rosenthal family, had moved to Vienna. Emil and Malwine had three daughters about whom I write about later. Emil died in 1898 at the age of 50. Dr. Tanzer wrote that his death was a major loss for the Rosenthal firm.

Due to the success of that firm, Emil was a wealthy man when he died. However, a few years after his death, the firm had trouble and, in 1902, because of these problems, Malwine sold her interest in the firm for 600,000 Kronen to the Kredit-Anstalt. According to my grandfather's memoirs, her interest in the firm had been worth about twice as much a few years earlier. Much of her remaining fortune was lost during World War I, the inflation of the 1920's, and the stock market crash.

A few years after Emil's death, Malwine moved to an apartment on the Ringstrasse where she lived until the Anschluss. Her oldest daughter Erna and Erna's husband Richard Schüller lived in an apartment in the same building. (When I was a child, I visited both of these apartments frequently.)

From the time of Emil's death until she herself died, Malwine only wore black dresses and she always wore Emil's wedding ring along with her own.

A few days after the Anschluss, Malwine and her daughter Erna traveled to Italy. Erna's husband who had just escaped from Austria by hiking across an Alpine pass into Italy joined them there in July 1938. In 1939, Malwine and Erna went to England where they lived until they were able to get an American visa in 1941. Richard Schüller had left Italy and gone to England earlier and got a Visa to the U.S. in 1940 because he had received a faculty appointment at the New School for Social Research in New York.

For most of the rest of her long life, Malwine lived in a not very elegant but comfortable apartment in the Riverdale section of the Bronx together with Erna and Richard Schüller and Malwine's youngest daughter, Ida.

Despite her advanced age, Malwine's health was reasonably good during much of the time when she lived in New York. I remember her as being lively, intelligent and generally in good humor during this period. My parents, my sister, and I lived nearby and visited her frequently. She spent a lot of time reading, knitting, embroidering and receiving visitors – most of whom were family members.

In the final years of her life, she lost most of her eyesight but became an avid listener to recordings provided by the Lighthouse for the Blind. Later she began to suffer from serious arteriosclerosis and general senility. She died in 1962 at the age of 104.

Comments about the descendants of Emil and Malwine Rosental.

As already noted, Emil and Malwine had three daughters. The oldest, Erna, born in 1880, married Richard Schüller who became a high-ranking official in the government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the government of the Austrian Republic. In the 1930's, he served as the Austrian delegate to the League of Nations and he was a member of the League's Economic Committee for many years. He wrote several books about economics. When he died in 1972, he was 102 years old. Erna died in 1968 at the age of 88. (Richard Schüller's biography and his all too cryptic memoirs were published in a book called "Unterhändler des Vertrauens" by Jürgen Nautz. This book was published in 1990 by the Verlag für Geschichte und Politik Wien – R. Oldenbourg Verlag, München).

Emil and Malwine's second daughter Hedwig (born 1882) married Herrmann Blau in Vienna. (Blau later changed his name to Berndt). That marriage ended in divorce. Hedwig and her two sons emigrated to Chile after the Anschluss and lived there for the rest of their lives.

Malwine's third daughter Ida (born 1885) married Dr. Stefan Weidenfeld – a Viennese dermatologist – who died in 1917. As noted above, Ida emigrated to New York after the Anschluss and lived with Malwine and the Schüllers for many years. She died in Westchester County, New York.

Erna and Richard had three daughters. The oldest was my mother, Ilse, born in 1904 who married my father Maximilian Mintz in 1926. They emigrated to the United States in 1938. My mother worked briefly as an economist in Vienna and became a Professor of Economics at Columbia University. My father had been a lawyer in Vienna and became a successful accountant in New York. After my father's retirement, my parents moved to Washington, D.C. where my father died in 1973 and my mother died in 1978.

They had two children one of whom is the author of this essay. I am married to Sandra Earl Mintz and we have no children. I spent most of my career on Wall Street; Sandy was a magazine editor for many years. My sister Marjorie recently retired as a Professor of Literature at Stanford University. She is married to Dr. Joseph K. Perloff who is a well-known Professor of Cardiology. Marjorie and Joseph have two daughters: Nancy Lempert and Carey Giles. Nancy has one son and Carey has two children. The Perloffs, their children, and grandchildren live in California.

Erna's second daughter Susanne Piroli married an Italian physician in the mid 1930's and lived in Rome for the rest of her life that ended in 1995. She wrote two books, one about the Vatican and the second about the Borgias. Susanne and her husband, Giorgio, had one son, Riccardo, who became an actuary and lived in Rome. He was married to Guliana Segnalini and had no children. He died in the late 1980's.

Richard and Erna's third daughter's name was Hilde. She was an art historian who married Otto Kurz, also an art historian. Before the Anschluss, they emigrated from Vienna to London where they lived for the rest of their lives. They had one daughter, Erica Barrett, who lives in England with her husband Raymond, and has two children and several grandchildren. One of Erica's children, Philip, lives in Dallas, Texas; the other, Caroline, lives in England.

Hedwig, Malwine's second daughter had two sons – Stefan and Friedl who were born in Vienna, but lived for much of their lives in Chile where they died. Both of Hedwig's sons were successful businessmen and both had children and grandchildren who live in Chile.

Ida Weidenfeld (born 1885), Malwine's third daughter, had two daughters. The oldest is Lotte Weiss – a retired psychiatrist living in New York. She was married to a psychiatrist who is now dead. She had no children. Ida's younger daughter Anni was born in Vienna and emigrated to New York after the Anschluss. She was married to Pierino Perutz who was for many years an executive at a New York investment-banking firm. Both are now dead. Anni and Pierino had one daughter, Monica Wollner, who is married to an insurance executive, lives in Westchester County, and has two children - Wendy and David - as well as several grandchildren.

The History of the Rosenthals in Chile by Miguel and Claudio Berndt.

In 1939, at the beginning of the year, Hedwig Berndt (nee Rosenthal), and her two sons, Stefan and Hans F. stepped for the first time on Chilean soil. Desiree Loebel, the wife of Hans F., accompanied them. Hans F. had married Desiree in 1937 and his work took him to Paris, where he remained. When the Nazis invaded Austria in March 1938, Hans F., concerned for his mother and brother, succeeded in getting them to Paris in June of that year where all remained until February 1939, when they emigrated to Chile, the country for which they obtained visas.

The three arrived at Chile's main port, Valparaiso, one night in March, after a trip of over a month, under quite bad conditions. They had traveled from Paris. The day after arriving in Valparaiso, Hedwig, Stefan, Hans and Desiree took the train to Santiago, the capital of Chile, where they rented rooms at a downtown boarding house. Their landscape had taken on a new view – the impressive boulevards of Paris were exchanged for a magnificent view of a majestic mountain range, The Andes, with its eternal snow.

Soon after his arrival in Chile, Stefan started working for a local company as a salesman, and, on the side, to obtain a better income, also represented some European companies selling a variety of products. Hedwig was dedicated to her house and to the production of gloves in a combination of leather and wool. With that work, she was able to improve the income of the family group. Desiree, wife of Hans F. also started to work soon after her arrival in Chile; this work allowed them to survive in decent conditions, since it took Hans F. quite a while to obtain a job.

In 1942 Stefan married Hildegard Cramer, who had arrived in Chile from Germany, also in 1939, with her parents Carl and Alice.

In mid 1939, Carl Cramer established a flavor factory in Chile. That factory manufactures products that add flavor to finished foods, like soft drinks, ice cream, etc. Stefan worked there from 1942 until his death in June of 1985. He started as a salesman, traveling by train all over this long and narrow country, visiting the existing customers and looking for new ones. Later on, and as the company grew and developed, he took on a management position, traveled less, and supervised sales in Santiago and Valparaiso, and controlled the sales force that covered the rest of the country.

Stefan had two sons, Miguel, born in 1944, and Claudio, born in 1947. Both of them are today in charge of the family business, with the help of their children. The business has expanded substantially over the years.

Stefan was an active member of the Association of Austrians in Chile. The Austrian government honored him for his contribution in maintaining alive the relationship between the citizens of these two countries.

Stefan and his wife Hilda, returned to Europe for the first time in 1956, after a long trip by ship from Buenos Aires to Genoa. They traveled for four months through several countries, including Austria.

Hedwig Berndt always lived alone in her own house, being visited daily by at least one of her sons. Her health deteriorated progressively, and she passed away in September of 1967.

Stefan had five grandchildren (three from Miguel and two from Claudio).

Now, going back to Hans F. at first, he had several smaller jobs, but after some years in Chile he formed a partnership with two friends and established a company dedicated to the sale of photographic items and equipment. They also obtained the representation of the prestigious Rosenthal porcelain for the Chilean market. This was a great success.

In 1947, his only child, a daughter, Eva, was born. Hans F. and his wife Desiree had two grandchildren, whom they enjoyed very much.

He worked up to 1963 in the photographic company, when he and his family left for two years to travel through Europe. During that time he visited Hohenems.

After Hans F. and Desiree returned to Chile, Hans F. started to work as manager in a company representing medical and laboratory equipment.

In September 1970, Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile with the backing of the Communist and Socialist parties. Hans F. and his wife decided to leave Chile fearful of what might happen. They returned to Europe, living in Munich until 1980, at which time they returned to Chile, where Hans F. remained until his death in 1989.

A very interesting aspect in the lives of Berndt Rosenthal brothers, is that having been born four years apart they also died four years apart, and on the same day, June 16, both at the age of 81 years.

In spite of the distance they always stayed in touch with several of their Rosenthal cousins living in the USA and Europe.

SISTER HEDWIG WAHLE, 1931-2001

Sister Hedwig Wahle, a member of the Brunner family, passed away in London on August 23, 2001 after a courageous battle against illness, first detected at the time of the Descendants Meeting in 1998. Many of us met Sister Hedwig at the time of that meeting, but, as much as we were impressed with her personally, few of us knew the importance of her work.

Sister Hedwig was born in Vienna in 1931 and named Anna Wahle. Despite the fact that she was baptized at birth and regularly attended church, and despite the fact that her father was a judge and First World War soldier and her mother an insurance mathematician, what mattered to the Nazis was that she had four Jewish grandparents. Therefore, under Nazi law, she was considered Jewish.

Thus in January 1939, she and her brother were sent to England as part of the Kindertransport. In 1991, Sister Hedwig, after careful research into the documents retained by her parents, including letters written both before and after the war, wrote a fascinating account of both her participation in the Kindertransport and life in England during the war years. She also told the amazing story of her parents' survival in Vienna during the war years. Unfortunately, the article published in German in Entschluss issue of Nr.5/1991 has never been translated.

After the war, Anna Wahle remained in England at the Convent and School of the Sisters of Sion to obtain her Higher School Certificate. She returned to Vienna in 1950, and studied mathematics and physics. She also began her theological studies at Stephansplatz in Vienna. After completing her studies in 1954 at the University in Vienna, she taught at a Viennese school. Then in 1955, she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Sion in Vienna. At that time, she adopted her mother's name, Hedwig. After her retirement, she moved to the English Sion in London, so she could be close to her brother, Father Francis Wahle, who is the priest at Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Queensway, in Notting Hill, London. He generously gave the American Friends copies of numerous obituaries extolling the life of Sister Hedwig. Those obituaries have been given to the Museum.

Sister Hedwig learned Hebrew and studied Judaism in Paris from 1962 to 1964. She continued those studies at the University of Vienna beginning in 1966, and in 1971 received her PhD. She also studied Catholic Theology, completing those formal studies in 1982. After that, she became a teacher of Religious studies.

In 1966, she, together with others, undertook an examination of Austrian school and religious books to assure the elimination of all anti-Judaic contents. The next year, she formed the Informationszentrum im Dienst der

christl.-jüd. Verständigung (Information Center in the Service of Christian-Jewish Understanding), and led that organization until she left Vienna in 1991. While in Vienna and thereafter, she worked tirelessly, through her writings and other good works, to eliminate any anti-Semitism in the Church and the church's writings and to bring together Jews and Christians.

The December 2001 issue of *Dialog of the Christlich-Judische Informationen* was devoted to the memory of Sister Hedwig. Included in that issue is an excerpt from her last book "Jews and Christians in Dialogue," published in 1997. The limits of space preclude us from summarizing adequately the comments describing the importance of Sister Hedwig's life made in the numerous obituaries we have read. Suffice to say that the December issue of *Dialog*, containing obituaries from Rabbis and leaders of various Christian faiths, makes clear her devotion to the task of bringing all people together.

ALFRED OTTO MUNK, 1925 - 2002

By Rega Wood

Alfred Otto Munk was born in Vienna on April 10, 1925, the grandson of Lucian Brunner and the son of Regina Pauline Brunner Engelsberg and Hans Munk. He left Vienna with Gertrude Munk Clark, his sister, on the March day Hitler arrived. Gertrude and the smuggler who got her out claimed to be on their way to Switzerland for a romantic weekend. At 12, Al was not the right sort of company for romance, so he had to hide in the trunk.

Al and his family arrived in the U.S. in 1939; they traveled from Zurich to London and then by boat to New York. After high school in Pasadena, California, he briefly attended the University of California at Berkeley, but was recruited as a member of the OSS (Office of Special Services). Behind enemy lines, he posed as a member of the Wehrmacht.

Soon afterwards, he matriculated at Stanford University, graduating summa cum laude in 1949. He was employed by the California-Texas Oil Company from 1949 to 1964 and was the Manager of Foreign Affairs at Amoco Corporation from 1964 until his retirement in 1990.

No doubt, Al was grateful when his adventurous life settled down a bit. A couple years after graduation he met and married Frances, with whom he lived happily for 51 years. Al Munk had one son, Peter Munk, and a daughter, Karen Demastus, and four grandchildren. He was a member of the Board of Trustees at the University of North Carolina at Asheville from 1993 until 1999. His love of music brought him to the Brevard Music Center where he served on the Advisory Board and the Board of Directors for many years. He was a member of St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church in Flat Rock, where he is buried.

FINAL NOTES

We have discussed with Dr. Häfele and others at the Museum how the American Friends can best contribute to the Museum. While governmental authorities in Austria pay essential operating costs, funding for other important components of the Museum's program are not covered. For example, the Museum's web site is currently only available in German. No government funding will pay for an English web site. While a summary of the Rosenthal exhibit appears in English on the current web site, the balance of the web site is only available in German at present. An English web site would be convenient for the American Friends who are not fluent in German, and also might draw interest from others who, because of a language barrier, are not conversant with the Museum and its mission.

The Museum wants not only to commemorate the Jewish community of Hohenems, but also to condemn the Nazis' actions within the region. The Nazis not only deported and killed the Jewish residents of Hohenems and Vorarlberg, but also tried to eliminate Jewish history. The Museum aims to help reverse that attempt. It aspires to tell the Jewish history of Hohenems through stories and objects from both the past and the present. As

demonstrated by the current exhibit, the Museum also seeks to cultivate a bond among the descendants of the Hohenems Jewish community. The kindness and hospitality with which the descendants were received at the time of the Descendant's Meeting in 1998, and again when some of us attended the opening of the Rosenthal Exhibit further evidences the Museum's regard for the families of the old Jewish community. The Jewish Museum Hohenems deserves our support. With our backing, it will remain a place where past and future generations can effectively communicate and hopefully heed the lessons of history.

Dear Members and Friends,

This year, in order to encourage your continued generosity, Stephan and Renee Rollin have again demonstrated their devotion to the Jewish Museum Hohenems and its vital mission by offering to **match your voluntary contributions, dollar for dollar, regardless of size!**

In our recent past, AFJMH has recompensed the Museum for providing the magnificent commemorative book "Hohenems Revisited," to all our members and supporters. Your dues and contributions have paid for urgently needed repairs to the covered sanctuary at the entrance to the historic Jewish cemetery. AFJMH has also contributed to the translation of Eva Grabher's dissertation, "Letters to Hohenems," one chapter of which was published in our most recent Newsletter. (Following publication, Dr. Grabherr will also furnish a bound copy of her entire dissertation to the American Friends).

As noted above, members of our Board have met with the president of the Museum Association and others to discuss how AFJMH can best serve the Museum. As a result, (depending on the success of this year's fund raising efforts) two suggestions under consideration are:

- ◆ Creation of a web site for the Museum in English
- ◆ Support for special Exhibitions at the Museum

Any other suggestions from you, our members, are welcome.

All of the Museum staff are devoted professionals. The Museum is of momentous significance to the community of Hohenems, the province of Vorarlberg and, indeed to Austria. In addition to Vorarlberg newspapers, an important Viennese newspaper was represented at the opening of the Rosenthal exhibit. At least two articles were published in Vienna.

Numerous student groups who regularly visit the Museum would not otherwise learn about the rich Jewish heritage of this region. During your editor's stay last month, the Museum staff frequently expressed their belief that continued support, by visits, in kind legacies as well as AFJMH contributions for special projects of this ever improving Museum, are vital.

