

In Touch

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE
JEWISH MUSEUM HOHENEMS, INC.

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Letter from the President

TIMOTHY L. HANFORD

Dear Friends and Supporters of AFJMH:

It is my pleasure to share this special year-end newsletter with you. As you will see from the articles in the newsletter, this has been another exemplary year for the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

Museum Director **Hanno Loewy** tells us in this issue about the evolution of the Jewish Museum Hohenems from its founding in 1986 to its current cultural role as a living institution uniting Vorarlberg residents with Hohenems descendants around the world. I am excited by his discussion of concepts for the re-thinking and much-needed expansion of the Museum's physical facilities. I am confident the AFJMH will play a role in supporting these important developments.

We also hear from longtime AFJMH Trustee and Rosenthal descendant **Susan Shimer** about her personal experiences in leaving Hohenems as a young girl and moving to the United States, where she later became a lawyer and then a judge. Sue has been instrumental in guiding the AFJMH and, for many years served as the Editor of this newsletter (a task now inherited by her daughter—thank you, Jennifer).

As you are no doubt aware, the mission of the AFJMH is to provide additional financial support for the Jewish Museum Hohenems. The AFJMH also provides financial assistance for maintaining the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery. Your support for the museum's exhibitions, its publications, its research, and its events is absolutely indispensable. **Accordingly, I would like to encourage you to continue your financial support.**

The AFJMH is proud to have so many American Hohenems descendants as members. But we are always pleased to welcome more! Please send a note your siblings and cousins and urge them to take a look at the AFJMH website (www.AFJMH.org) and consider joining AFJMH.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to all for another productive year in 2020. Your past generosity to AFJMH is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,
Tim Hanford
President



Museum Summer Internship

College students who are descendants of Jewish families from Hohenems may still apply for a 2020 summer internship sponsored by the American Friends at the Jewish Museum Hohenems. This internship is an opportunity to gain in-depth appreciation of the history, culture and practices of the former Jewish community while assisting the director and staff of the museum in a variety of projects. The ability to read and speak German would be helpful but is not a requirement. The intern should be aware however that he or she will be living and working in an environment

where the German language will be spoken predominantly.

During her eight week stint in 2016 and again by her presence at the 2017 reunion, **Jessica Piper** distinguished herself as the first intern sponsored by AFJMH. In addition to her invaluable work to help prepare for the reunion she wrote an unforgettable blog and delivered a powerful speech during the opening session.

Further information regarding the terms and application process may be found on AFJMH's web site.

News from the Museum:

The Verein

The board of the Verein was newly elected in April. The new president is historian **Severin Holz knecht**. Born in 1987 in Lustenau, he has already published several books and essays on critical aspects of regional history of the 20th century. Right now he is also collaborating with the museum on the Yerusha project on Jewish archival sources in Switzerland.

Günter Lindner was reelected as vice-president and treasurer and **Daniel Mosman** as secretary. **Jutta Berger** is still representing the Verein in the board of the Museum. **Elisabeth Bitschnau**, **Dinah Ehrenfreund-Michlaer**, **Yves Bollag**, **Brigitte Plemel** and **Hildegard Schlatter** remain on the board of the Verein. **Evelyne Bermann** from Liechtenstein entered the board and replaced **Pierre Burgauer**, who was celebrated for so many years of enthusiastic engagement for the Museum.



Letter from the Director

DR. HANNO LOEWY

Dear Friends and dear families greetings from Hohenems,

For six months we turned our museum into a fresh representation of one of the most interesting and complex cities in the world (though far from being one of the much-discussed 'mega cities').

**ALL ABOUT
TEL AVIV-JAFFA**
DIE ERFINDUNG EINER STADT
7. APRIL—6. OKTOBER 2019

Tel Aviv-Jaffa and its complex history and presence, its Jewish dreams, Arab histories, and multicultural complexities of today was never presented like this before – and our catalogue serves as the most comprehensive existing resource book about the city.

With the Tel Aviv-Jaffa exposition behind us we now turn our attention to a very different city (if we may call it a "city"): Hohenems and the urban context of a dynamic museum that is starting to reach out for new horizons. With between 17.000

and 20.000 visitors each year the capacity of our venue – the Heimann-Rosenthal villa—is starting to reach its limits. In cooperation with the University of Liechtenstein and its students of architecture we are testing utopias and possibilities of further developing our premises. Nothing to be seen in the near future – but definitely something to think about in the years ahead. The City of Hohenems as a whole is developing into inspiring directions.

The Villa of Iwan and Franziska Rosenthal, forming the "entrance" into both the Jewish quarter and the "Christengasse," is now the subject of a proposed development would include the new "House of Literature" in Vorarlberg, contributing to the vibrant cultural scene of the whole region.

In November our next major exhibition will open its doors to the public: "End of testimony?" This exhibition will reflect on the coming turn of generations, when witnesses of the Holocaust will only be present in media, from books to video interviews. Please find more information about



Proposal 1



Proposal 2



Proposal 3

Photos Courtesy of Johannes Neumayer

News from the Museum (*Cont'd*)

Letter from the Director (*Cont'd*)

this exhibition and the collaboration with our partners in this newsletter.

Finally, we ask you for your support for a new exhibition planned for next year that will explore the history of a prominent Hohenems family: the Brunners. Thanks to a generous permanent loan to our collections we are able to tell the adventure of a great European story, from Hohenems to Trieste, the city that formed a crossroad of German, Romanic and Slavic influences and claims – and the Mediterranean connection to the “East,” regarded as both a token of “identity” and heritage and a market opportunity for a growing economy. The Brunners actively took part in this dynamic process including its major crisis from 1914 to 1945.

We undertake this journey into the Brunner story against the backdrop of increasing tensions in Europe and the world today. Tensions that go along with a disturbing renaissance of nationalism and xenophobia, Antisemitism and separatism, cracks and fissures in the fragile European community. In 2014 we stimulated a debate

about the role of Jews as the “first Europeans” – now we have to consider if Jews might also be the “Last Europeans” who will uphold the European dream of diversity and integration.

Together with the Central European University, now starting to operate in Vienna, we want to explore possible futures of Europe – as well as role Jewish heritage and Jewish presence can play in this open game.

We hope for your support. There are still gaps in the family story we seek for help to close, and naturally all this will only possible with financial support from all the sources we can reach. We are a small museum but we think big. That’s what you expect from us, so there always remain gaps to close.

I hope to see you soon in Hohenems - or let’s get in touch through all the means of communication the modern world offers us.

With Love from Hohenems,
Hanno Loewy

Other major events in 2019

Summer University

From June 30 to July 5, 50 students from Austria, Germany and Switzerland came to Hohenems to study the significance of food in Jewish history and tradition: “Enjoy Your Meal!”

Are you what you eat? – Not only in Jewish history did food always have a highly symbolic and identity-establishing dimension. This applies not only to religious dietary laws, ethnic specialties, local traditions, or offers of identity for migrants. Nostalgic communities of shared memories are created through dishes and beverages, yet, belonging and distinction is also expressed on an individual level.

The kashrut laws have stirred the imagination of both Jews and non-Jews alike and given rise to speculation about symbols of coexistence and health, nutritional physiology and religious beliefs. Similarly, they have brought about crosscurrents, also within Judaism itself, all the way to the deliberate violation of the dietary laws as a political statement. At the same time, it seems difficult to talk about a “Jewish kitchen.” Rather, we might talk about a Jewish twist on the Arab or Eastern European, American, Persian, or Italian kitchen.

Successful cooperation with the universities of Munich, Basel, Salzburg, Vienna, Zurich and Bamberg continues now for 10 years. In 2020 we expect the crowd again, and a program exploring the history and open future of “first and last Europeans.”

Annual Conference of the AG *Jüdische Sammlungen*

In September 2019, the Jewish Museum Hohenems hosted the annual conference of the AG Jüdische Sammlungen (Association of Jewish Collections). From Sept 17-20, 2019 around 50 delegates from institutions in the German-speaking Europe, the US, and also Eastern European countries gathered in Hohenems, taking part in guided tours through the museum’s permanent exhibition as well as the Jewish Quarter, the Jewish Cemetery and Escape Routes as well as the temporary exhibition “All about Tel Aviv-Jaffa.” In about 20 lectures delegates informed each other regarding new projects, ongoing research as well as about financial problems and challenges their institutions have had to face recently. The last day of the annual conference was spent in Innsbruck, where the delegates had the chance to visit the synagogue and the Jewish Cemetery, in a guided tour with **Niko Hofinger**.

Education

Besides the daily business of guided tours and workshops, the education department of the museum is involved in programs attracting different target groups and families in particular.

Special programs are offered every year during the Emsiana Festival that brings together contemporary world music, artists from the region and subjects related to the history and the urban heritage of Hohenems. In spring too the “Days of Action in Political Education” offer particular programs all over Austria – focusing for instance on the past and presence of refugees, while the “European Day of Jewish Culture” and the “Day of Monuments” organized by the Federal Office of Preservation, offer new insights into our permanent show or the Jewish quarter in September. The highlight of the year – at least with respect to visitor numbers – comes in the beginning of October with the “Long Night of Museums,” when 700 to 800 people storm the museum in one evening. Summer programs for children and families help to attract people living in the region, to go beyond the usual tracks. All this made it possible to continuously increase and develop our audiences, and to instigate new forms of communication and experience.

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

New Projects in the Collections

“Jewish Life in German-Speaking Switzerland” – a Yerusha project

The department Archive and Collections of the JMH successfully applied at the Hadaniv Europe Rothschild Foundation for another Yerusha archival project. After finishing the first project “Documentation of Jewish Life in Western Austria,” which took place from 2016-2018, the results showed a scientific desideratum regarding a summary of those archival collections, which cover Jewish history in Switzerland.

Starting in September 2019, the second Yerusha project “Jewish Life in German-Speaking Switzerland” will only focus on documents, archival stocks and collections in Northern and Eastern Switzerland, the German speaking cantons. Until the end of 2020, two researchers will look into the archival material of non-Jewish institutions, like the National Archive in Bern and various state archives, but also into the archives of Jewish communities and Jewish non-religious institutions, like sports clubs and cultural initiatives. At the project’s completion, the Rothschild Foundation will publish online the information discovered on Jewish life in German-speaking Switzerland as descriptive collections in the Yerusha database.

Hohenems Genealogy

Besides the continuous work on the museum’s collections (cataloguing, digitizing, etc.), the archival team also invests in the ever-growing Hohenems Genealogy. Thanks to the ongoing influx of genealogical information, the database covers today around 40.000 single personal data sheets. While in the early 2010s sponsored projects focused on building up this database with information from Jewish families in Tyrol or Liechtenstein, recently the Hohenems Genealogy has become a model for other, external genealogical projects.

Therefore, the museum is currently in conversation with various institutions, such as the Swiss Associations for Jewish Genealogy (SVJG), to find a way to feed in and preserve genealogical information digitally, like the Jewish family networks in Switzerland – using our database that is so easily accessible, attracting more and more family members, interested general users and professionals alike from everywhere.

Think Ahead

BY HANNO LOEWY

The Jewish Museum Hohenems was founded in 1986 as one of the first Jewish museums in the German-speaking countries after 1945. In 1991 it opened its doors with its first permanent exhibition. Those participating were aware that they had not only created a place for the mediation of history, but also a space for lively engagement with the present. In his opening speech, Governor Martin Purtscher made it clear that dealing with Jewish history and culture was of eminently political importance. The aim was to create a space in which the public could discuss the relationship between majority and minorities without taboos – In a society marked by immigration.

At the same time, this museum, as a living institution, brought together the contemporary city of Hohenems and the province of Vorarlberg with a lively community of descendants from all over the world, for whom the history of the Jewish community of Hohenems to this day represents the formative root of their cosmopolitanism.

Within just a few years, the ambitious foundation of the museum in Hohenems was regarded in Europe as a model project for successful museum work that productively linked past and present, local perspectives and global horizons.

From the outset, the museum, with the support of the Federal Government in Vienna, has been able to develop exemplary methods of museum education. With the growing exchange with the families of the descendants and in cooperation with the University of Innsbruck, the museum became the center of Jewish family research and biographically oriented collection activity in the Alpine region. For ten years now, the museum has also hosted the European Summer University for Jewish Studies, which it organizes jointly with six universities in the German-speaking countries – but is also an inspiring venue for a wide variety of public programs, seminars and conferences.

Finally, the museum has also developed into a center of innovative curatorial productions with its provocatively contemporary, originally designed and internationally acclaimed



Prof. Hugo Dworzak explaining the philosophy of various proposals

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

special exhibitions. And even the small museum café has become a lively place of communication and encounter in the city.

In recent years, all this has meant not only a steady increase in the number of visitors, but also an increase in the number of staff and premises, which now extend over six buildings in the city.

Not least with its temporary exhibition rooms in the basement of the historic Villa Heimann-Rosenthal, the museum has reached limits that massively hinder the further development of its work. For many years we and our international advisory board have been discussing possible perspectives for the development of the museum with the sponsors of the museum, the "Verein," the City of Hohenems and the State of Vorarlberg.

We are very grateful that the City of Hohenems and the State of Vorarlberg have now given us the opportunity, together with the University of Liechtenstein and its Faculty of Architecture, with Hugo Dworzak and his students, to initiate reflection on the spatial development of the museum. This still might be utopian – but the history of this museum is a story of dreams that came true.

As part of a semester project, 13 students intensively studied the museum's development needs and possibilities – and the urban

context in which we are embedded. From October 23 to November 17 2019 the ideas, plans and models were presented in the Jewish Museum and have been vividly discussed.

Their works, some realistic, some utopian, open up thought spaces and discourses, stimulate dreaming and reckoning, the examination of dear habits and the recognition of what is really important to us. The artistic originality, versatility and extraordinary craftsmanship of their designs not only testify to the quality of the education at the University of Liechtenstein and the support provided by the teachers there, but also to the inspiration that emanates from the place that we want to further develop as a place of thought and discourse, and whose magical charisma we want to cherish and cultivate: the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

Our thanks go to all those involved and our hope rests on the willingness to continue to support us on this path.



Photo Courtesy of Johannes Neumayer

Press conference with Prof. Hugo Dworzak (Liechtenstein University), Hanno Loewy, Severin Holzknacht (Verein), Dieter Egger (mayor) and Maximilian Zwickl (student)



New Exhibition: End of Testimony?

From **November 10, 2019, to April 13, 2020** the Jewish Museum Hohenems—together with the Concentration Camp Memorial of Flossenbürg in Bavaria, and in cooperation with the German Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” (EVZ)—will confront the turning point of remembrance of the Holocaust, curated by **Anika Reichwald** together with **Miriam Bürer** and **Hanno Loewy**, **Christa Schikorra** and **Jörg Skriebeleit**.

Soon, living witnesses of the Nazi crimes will no longer be among us. All that will remain are their memories captured in books, interviews, historic film productions, exhibitions, and educational projects. As of late, we are even able to meet survivors of the Nazi period in holograms.

Testimonies are replacing live witnesses. Hence, this exhibition deals with the question of how to handle this heritage in a responsible manner. How to deal with the legacy these survivors have bequeathed to us? How to deal with the fact that we must approach these narratives with the same critical mindset as any other historical source?

The exhibition looks at various aspects of narrated memories by Holocaust survivors: How do these testimonies come about? How are memories shaped into a story, and to what extent are they shaped (by third parties)? How have testimonies been produced, collected, and preserved since the 1940s? How are they used in the public sphere? And how do museums and memorial sites deal with these testimonies today and in a future in which the survivors will no longer be able to report in person?



Anita and Renate Lasker. Anita Lasker, having survived Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen, gave her first audio testimony to the BBC on the day of her liberation in 1945

Something Made—the Witness Dialog

Only rarely is it nowadays still possible to be in the presence of eyewitnesses telling about the Nazi period. Instead, those media formats are piling up in which interviews are presented or retrievable. Usually, the interview is presented as a holistic product whereby the genesis of such a production remains obscured.

Yet, the conversation that develops between the narrator and the trained interviewer is subject to its own rules of dramaturgy and communication. Narrators but also interviewers have each their own notions: memories are consciously concealed or emphasized, questions remain unanswered or are declined. The contemporary witness interview occurs within a reciprocal spectrum of expectations of “objective information” and “subjective experiences” and resembles a stage production: light, makeup, image and sound, technical equipment.

In documentary film sequences, it is almost impossible to discern the “making” of the narratives. But there are disruptions in the storytelling—the moments of technical or content-related interruptions—which unwittingly demonstrate that an interview is “being made.” These disruptions allow a view into the staging. Oftentimes, they reveal more about the interlocutors than what is actually said.

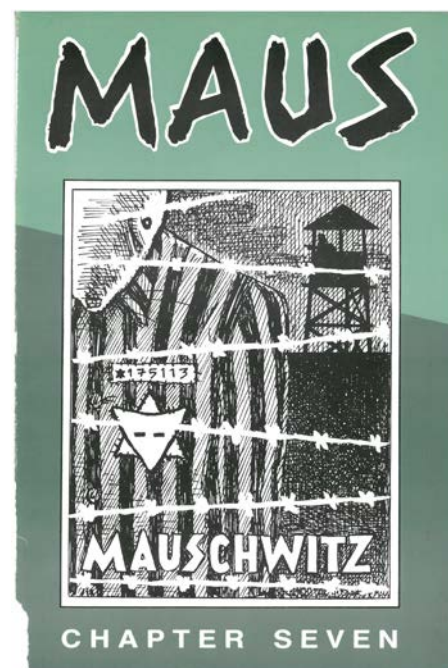


David Boder, recording first testimonies of survivors in 1946 (University Archives, Illinois Institute of Technology)

Narrative Structures of Remembering

Today, hundreds of thousands of recorded interviews with contemporary witnesses are extant. The narratives differ from each other even though they are often similar. The testimonies are colored by the speakers’ experiences and observe no chronology. They are, in fact, remembered fragments strung together by association, which as a story keep defying any logic since they sometimes follow a storyline only to be suddenly pierced by unexpected emotional moments or augmented by new secondary knowledge.

The exhibition looks into the video collection of testimonies held by the Jewish Museum Hohenems and shows by way of example how experiences, the memory of the Holocaust, the history before and after, find different expression in the narrative—be it in the form of a moral appeal, as a story of heroism, or else as a seemingly unstructured narrative. Nine excerpts from different interviews that were produced in conversations with Holocaust survivors present a cross section of ways of narrating memories.



Art Spiegelman/ Maus (first edition of the comic about the memories of his parents) (loan of Ole Frahm, Frankfurt)

New Exhibition: End of Testimony? (Cont'd)

Past, Present, and Future of Testimony

Even before World War II had concluded, the gathering and documenting of Holocaust survivors' memories began. Since then, the role of contemporary witnesses as well as the function of their stories has been in a constant state of flux. They were and still are historical sources, means of evidence in trials, political statements, and sometimes also manifestations of a disturbing, maladjusted memory. In the postwar societies of Western and Eastern Europe, the US, or Israel, they were—for many years—partially marginalized and, at times, also politically exploited.

By way of examples, a cultural-historical outline presents various forms of public depictions of survivors of Nazi persecution and their memories. It places them in their respective historical context in view of political developments since 1945. It turns its gaze on the manner in which survivors are perceived by society and on the way witness statements and reports of survival finally made their way into the public—also in literature and theater, film and comics.



Meyer Levin's typewriter



National memory of Buchenwald in the GDR. A "memory box" dedicated to the opening of the Buchenwald memorial in 1958 (loan of Gedenkstätte Buchenwald)

Who has the Power (of Interpretation)?

What will be the fate of the Holocaust survivors' interviews as soon as they themselves can no longer be able to speak for themselves? What will be the future significance of these collected testimonies? Are they able to replace the presence of witnesses? What is the responsibility of institutions whose task it is to preserve these testimonies and render them accessible to the general public?

What are the roles in which survivors are presented, and what is the function their testimony assumes in education and preservation of memories? What are the themes and public narratives, the political statements in which they are used?

And finally—how will future generations relate to these narratives—generations that already are and will be witnesses of their own times, their conflicts, experiences and catastrophes?

Three themes run through the small collection of video interviews with Holocaust survivors in the archive of the Jewish Museum Hohenems. They reflect the Museum's particular approach to the history of the Holocaust and its resonance in the region: survival through escape, survival through assumed identity as well as life after survival as Displaced Persons who have become homeless. It is now for the first time possible to watch all videos in full length as well as selected excerpts by subject matter.

A Collaboration that is open to future venues

"End of Testimony?" became possible through an intensive collaboration with our colleagues in the camp memorial institution of Flossenbürg in Bavaria and with the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future." Next year, the exhibition will be presented in Flossenbürg. There, the video archives of Flossenbürg will be examined with similar questions but also with particular interest in the highly diverse community of survivors of a camp, which was formed by political prisoners, German, Polish and Russian, Jewish and non-Jewish slave workers alike and many other groups of victims.

In 2021, the exhibition will travel to Munich (Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism) and Berlin (Centrum Judaicum), where it will be accompanied by similar research work in the respective collections.



This Is your Life/ Hanna Bloch Kohner (Ralph Edwards Production, USA 1953). Hanna Bloch Kohner was the first survivor appearing in a popular TV-Show

Vienna to New York 1938-1940

SUSAN ROSENTHAL SHIMER

I was just shy of my first birthday on the day of the Anschluss, March 12, 1938. And yet I remember an incident from that day. It was so different from what I had experienced until then. It was the first sign I had of any trouble.

I walked into a darkened living room of the apartment in which I lived with my parents and my maternal grandmother, a room that I expected to be bright and cheery. Instead, I noticed that the drapes were drawn. I went to the window and peeked out. I could see uniformed men marching down the street and red banners hanging from windows. I was quickly pulled away and admonished to stay away from the window. Even my ever-spoiling grandmother did not side with me, even though, as I recall, I gazed at her for help.

Soon there was another sign of big trouble. It was an alteration in our weekend activities. We had been going regularly to my Uncle Siegfried's home in Hellbrühl; suddenly we stopped going and I clamored to go; at first I was told soon; then eventually it became clear to little me that it would not happen again. So I stopped asking.

I was blond in those days, and that brought a strange moment that my mother did not like to recall. We were in the Prater, the big park of Vienna, and a Nazi soldier came over, patted my head and said to my mother "an echtes Deutsches mädchen" (*a real German girl.*)

The papers retained by my parents make clear that they sought to leave soon after the Anschluss. My mother began to wait on long lines at the American Embassy. There was a quota by country and one needed to stand on line to get a number. Finally, on August 19, 1938, my mother received a number for the wait list for Germans (we were now subject to that list), number 42,829. Nothing further happened until February 1939, when my parents received a printed form from the U.S. consulate stating that "as of this time the

middle European quota was filled, so that additional numbers can only be secured in future months. Documents submitted will only be reviewed in the order of the waitlist."

At that time, in order to obtain a visa one needed not only to meet all the paperwork requirements of the U.S. government and, of course, come off the waitlist, but one also needed a sponsor. My father's best friend, Hans Fried, a prominent Austrian lawyer, fled to the United States in March 1938 and had a number of valuable contacts there. He sent a telegram that said my father's job was to learn English and "my job" was to get the three of you a visa. There were several communications regarding an affidavit of support. The United States required that a sponsor be willing to support us for five years if we could not support ourselves. Dr. Fried secured three affidavits for us in 1939, all listing for what was at that time considerable assets and income. As far as I know, two were rejected but the third was accepted. The Consulate acknowledged its receipt on April 12, 1939.

However that did not mean we could leave or that the U.S. would accept us. A document from the Finance Office in Vienna, dated August 3, 1939, stated that no payments were required on exiting the country, if we did so within 3 months. However, not until October 30, 1939, after three months had passed, was the United States Consul prepared to review our application. An interview and medical examination was scheduled for November 27, 1939.

The visa was granted on January 18, 1940, by the American Vice Consul in Vienna and that same day my father (and my mother and I) were issued a "Reisepass" by the Nazi government. However, before leaving, my father had to pay a tax at the Creditanstalt. He did so on March 9, 1940 and a document was issued that day by the authorities in the 3rd District of Vienna, where we lived, allowing us to exit not later than the next day, March 10, 1940. So on March 10 we left Vienna by train for Trieste.

I should add that the United States, while their first choice, was not the only avenue my parents pursued to get out of Austria. My parents retained papers such as a clipping from a German language newspaper advertising how to get out of Nazi Germany—costs, and places that are easier to enter, e.g. Dominican Republic. My father wrote to former colleagues in other countries seeking positions. All came to naught. But they did secure a visa for Bolivia shortly before the United States issued its visa.

I know that the Nazi government had restrictions by 1940, which basically provided that you could not take anything with you, but clearly we did take a few things. My teddy bear came, as did other small objects that were not considered valuable. My mother's wedding band was platinum, but the authorities assumed it was silver—she got to keep it. However, her diamond ring stayed. . Larger objects were limited by



Susan Rosenthal Shimer at Gala Dinner ©CR Walser

Vienna to New York 1938-1940 (cont.)

space. My parents took one large object that could become our livelihood, a sewing machine. I do not recall other large objects. However, six trunks weighing 573 kgs that contained those worldly belongings that were allowed out of Vienna were shipped from Vienna to Trieste. Although they reached Trieste after we left, they never made it to New York. We actually received a certificate from some Nazi authority telling us that it was confiscated in 1944. The German government traced it to southern Austria, and from there the track was lost. Of course, money definitely could not be taken and we needed to rely on others to pay for our transport on the ship. I do not know if we could pay for the train to Trieste, our port of debarkation. I only knew that my parents repaid someone in New York soon after we arrived.

There was an explanation for the choice of our exit port. By going to Trieste, my parents told me later, it would give them a longer sea voyage, specifically two weeks, to relax on the ship before the challenges that awaited them. And better yet, we had relatives in Trieste. The Brunner and Rosenthal families both came from Hohenems, and a Rosenthal girl married a Brunner boy. Karoline Rosenthal Brunner was a child of Philipp Rosenthal (my great great grandfather); her sister Mathilde was my great grandmother. So, as I was to learn later, before leaving Vienna, my father communicated with his Trieste cousins. A granddaughter of the Brunners that cared for us in Trieste, Helen Brunner, found that the wife of one of the cousins, Fanny Bles English by birth, wrote in her diary, "today Philipp's son, wife and daughter are coming to office; They had left Vienna en route for New York." This Philipp was not the father of Karoline or Mathilde, but rather a grandson of the original Philipp; he was my grandfather.

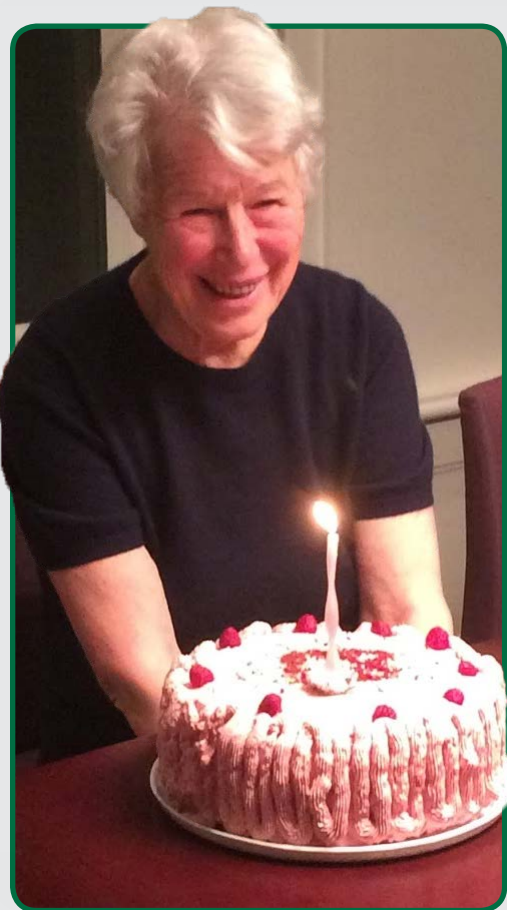
Back in Vienna, I remember everyone gathered together at the rail station where sadness permeated the air, but I could not understand why everyone was so sad. I had been protected from what was happening and the consequences for our future. I did not know that I would never again see my grandmother with whom we had been living. I was also never again to see my uncle (Robert Rosenthal) and his wife, killed at Auschwitz, or my favorite great uncle, who I called Onkel Siegfried, who was also killed there. There was so much I did not know.

We sat at the rear of a car on the train to Trieste, the point of departure for our boat—just the three of us, slightly separated by a wall from the main compartment. My mother told me that she underwent a full body search by a woman to insure that she was not smuggling out anything—like a diamond. Behind us in the same section of the train was a uniformed man. At some point still in Austria, the uniformed man came over to me and gave me what seemed to me to be a large chocolate bar. I still recall that my parents were most hesitant about letting me have it, but the man and I were most anxious that I accept. I finally was allowed to take it and soon took a bite. I remember it being my first chocolate in a long time. And in my memory, it is still huge.

My most vivid memory of Trieste was on my birthday. We walked to the town house of Philipp and Fanny Brunner. As we approached the house, I saw that the small flight of stairs leading to the entrance was lined with balloons. The house itself was also decorated and at least one present awaited me—a beautiful doll.

After traveling through the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, we came to the Azores and then the open seas. One night, perhaps more, my father took me to the bottom deck, and we looked out from the back of the boat and I could see the wake of the boat. What a sight that was for me—the blackness and the white wake. How hard my parents tried to make this a joyous departure for me. The blackness of the sea and the white wake remain with me today.

The open seas also brought seasickness to almost all the adults, but not to me. So my parents, who were not well, told me to go to the dining room and I did. We had assigned tables and I sat at my usual table—all alone. There we were usually served family style. A waiter brought olives to the table and then a huge chunk of meat; I think large enough for all the others—6 or 8 assigned to that table. I ate many olives but couldn't cut the meat and I guess I had been taught not to pick up the meat and chew on it. Eventually, a man, who was fleeing Germany, I think, arrived. I assume he was assigned to that table, as well. He sat down with me and cut the meat for me. I could still eat some despite the huge volume of olives that I had consumed. I don't think my parents knew this man, Mr. Meyer, before our trip, but after two weeks at sea, they clearly did. After we came to New York we shared an apartment with him and his wife for at least a year. As I recall it was a 7-room apartment, a curtained glass door separating their part



Vienna to New York 1938-1940 (cont.)

from ours. It was at 534 West 152nd Street. Before moving there, we lived for a few weeks at 30 West 71st in Manhattan, but I have no recollection about that.

Now let me revert to the boat and our arrival in New York. I have no recollection of going through Ellis Island, but the Ellis Island records show that I was cleared there. However, I do remember the view of the skyline, and I seem to have had ample time to view it. Eventually, we did get off the boat in New York, walked down the gangplank and saw lots of people awaiting the boat's arrival. What we did immediately after that I do not recall.

Almost immediately on arrival, I was sent to a nursery school. No one spoke German, or at least admitted to understanding me. So one of the most vivid memories of my early life was trying to tell a teacher that I needed to go the bathroom, Badezimmer. She did not understand. I became frantic and started pounding on this gigantic person, and eventually, I was shown a bathroom.

I was told that inside 6 weeks, I was speaking English perfectly. The foregoing is based on family documents and my recollections. The subject of those years was almost taboo in family conversations.

Does someone in your family have a story to share about their journey? Have you heard a story about a journey that you can share? Please write it and we can include it in an upcoming InTouch newsletter. Send it to: newsletter@affmh.org or jennsp500@gmail.com (editor). **We want to hear from you!**

Memories of Hohenems

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The Brunners ©CR Walser



The Dannhausers ©Helmut Schlatter



The Hirschfelds ©CR Walser



The Reichenbachs ©Helmut Schlatter

ARCHE NOAH – Sammlung Kunst & Natur

The most important museum between Munich and Zürich is about to open its doors at the outskirts of Hohenems. From early May on, Hans Bäuml's private museum "Arche Noah – Sammlung Kunst und Kultur" will show one of the most significant Spitzweg collections, along with works by the greatest exponents of French impressionism such as Monet, Manet, Renoir, Matisse, Gauguin, Degas, and Cézanne. Other featured painters include Waldmüller, Defregger, Lenbach, Stuck, Corot, Vlaminck, Sisley, Liebermann, Corinth, Marc, Macke, Pechstein, Nolde, and Jawlensky. A natural history collection shows mounted animals, as well as fossils and minerals from all over the world.



The Landauers ©Helmut Schlatter



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