

Ancestry and Early Years

The von Hippel clan was fortunate in finding a biographer while records were still available;¹ the original documents -- preserved in East Prussia -- vanished during the Russian conquest at the end of World War II.

East Prussia was conquered by the "Deutsche Orden" (German knightly orders) from the "heathens" in 1230-83. The Deutsche Orden were descendents of German crusaders who had been in the Holy Land. From there they were forced to retreat -- first to Rhodes, from which the Turks forced them out after a 100-year siege, and then to Malta, from which they were forced to return to Germany. Finally, they went on a crusade to conquer the heathens of Eastern Europe. East Prussia became a temporal state in 1525 and a part of Brandenburg in 1618. The Prince elector of Brandenburg was crowned Friedrich I, King of Prussia, in Königsberg in 1701. After the defeat of France in 1871, the King of Prussia was crowned "German Emperor" at Versailles.*

The recorded family history begins in the 15th century with an ancestor, Matthäus von Hippel, Counselor and Hereditary Lord² of Tschirndorff and Zehrbeutel, two royal land grants³ with iron works in Lower Silesia at the boundary of the principality⁴ of Brandenburg. The family thus belonged to the nobility⁵ of the Oberlausitz in Silesia. Historical prominence was first achieved by Georg von Hippel (1564-1632) as chancellor⁶ of the Elector,⁷ Johann Sigismund von Brandenburg. A bejeweled picture of the elector with the coat of arms of Brandenburg, hung on a gold chain to be worn around the neck, was in the family possession until recently.

* Figure 1 shows maps of Germany before and after World War II. [Reprinted by permission from *Germany: A Short History* by Donald S. Detwiler (Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press) pp. 175, 213.]

After the death of the Elector, Georg moved to East Prussia near the town of Rastenburg. His two sons, Georg and Melchior, are the ancestors of the "Löwensteiner" and of the "Rastenburger" family lines respectively. We belong to the latter. A nephew of the older Georg, Melchior (1612), was chancellor⁸ of the Great Elector, Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg (1640-1688).

Two historically still-well-known members of the von Hippel family are Theodor Gottlieb the Elder [1741-96, see Figure 2] and the Younger [1775-1843, see Figure 3] -- both of the Younger Löwensteiner Line. The former, Mayor of Königsberg (capital of East Prussia) and a close friend of the philosopher, Immanuel Kant, wrote, besides other books, the first treatise on the emancipation of women.⁹ His nephew, a high official in the government of Prussia, wrote for the King of Prussia in 1812 the "Call to My People."¹⁰ This call to arms against Napoleon started the war between Germany and France that ended with the exile of Napoleon to St. Helena and the liberation of Germany. Pictures of both ancestors in action -- the older with Kant and other friends at the Sunday table (Kant and his "roundtable", see Figure 4),¹¹ the younger reading the "Call to Arms" to an excited assembly of citizens in the Town Hall of Königsberg -- still exist as copies in the family possession.

East Prussia remained a home base of our family up to the Russian takeover at the end of World War II. The desperate flight of some relatives at that time is vividly described by my cousin, Sabine Hoth.¹²

The family crest is of slightly wild heraldic design (see Figure 5¹³) but the family motto is more to my taste: "Mehr Sein als Scheinen," translated: "Be more than you seem to be"¹⁴ -- a noble and appropriate statement.

While many of our Eastern relatives were large landholders or went into the military service, my grandfather, Arthur von Hippel (1841-1916), became one of the first professors of ophthalmology and my father, Robert von Hippel (1866-1951), was a professor of criminal law.

Our father, Robert von Hippel, was so fortunate as to have married the loveliest wife and mother imaginable, Emma Bremer, elder daughter of Peter Bremer, Professor of Roman Law at the University of Strasburg. My mother (see Figure 6) was born on September 30, 1871 in Kiel, the location of a starting university for young professors. Her mother, Charlotte, (born Erxleben in Zürich, 16 February 1849), became ill with bone tuberculosis and died in the first days of February 1887. My mother took care of her mother and father from her fourteenth year. She had a two-year-younger sister, Marie Bremer, who studied in Paris. (Women were

not yet admitted into German universities.) "Tante Mariechen" was a wonderful educator and played a beloved and memorable role in our lives (see also Figure 6).

Children of young German professors around the turn of the century were apt to be born in less prestigious universities, such as Rostock or Greifswald on the Baltic Sea -- way stations to future eminence. Thus my brother, Fritz, and I made our appearance in Rostock on the 28th of April 1897 and the 19th of November 1898 respectively, while brother Ernst -- the eldest of this masculine trio -- entered life in Strasburg on 28 September 1895, during the apprenticeship of my father as the equivalent of a U.S. Associate Professor¹⁵ (see Figure 7).

Four days after my birth, our father was called to Berlin and offered a full professorship of criminal law in Göttingen, the very prestigious state university¹⁶ of the former kingdom of Hannover, which had been absorbed by Prussia as a result of the war of 1866 with Austria. Since the kings of Hannover had also been the kings of England, one finds in Göttingen relics such as trophies from the Cook expedition.

Father went to Göttingen shortly before Christmas 1898, accepted the professorship and searched for a house with a large garden. We moved into a yellow brick villa on the Friedländerweg early in April 1899. At that time, Friedländerweg lay at the edge of town with fields stretching towards the Hainberg, a small mountain to the east. The large window of our playroom overlooking the street became a favorite observation post for us three brothers. Our trio was enlarged to a quartet by the birth of our sister, Olga, on 22 June 1903. My immediate statement at first sight: "We have been cheated, she has no teeth," later gave way to a more loving judgment. Olga became my close lifelong companion.

Our grandmother, Olga von Hippel (see Figure 8), died quite suddenly of pneumonia on 30 October 1900. Soon thereafter, grandfather Arthur (see Figures 8 and 9) moved from Halle to Göttingen and into a house on the Friedländerweg (No. 35) not far from us and founded the "Augenlinik," the ophthalmological hospital of the university. Grandfather was very beloved and respected by us and his patients and the Augenlinik played a memorable role in our lives. We were invited there to Christmas parties where patients, doctors and house-staff celebrated together under beautifully decorated Christmas trees and, when eyes and eyeglasses were demolished in school fights, we were stitched up at the hospital. On one of these occasions I had to wait for attention, while grandfather and his assistants chased a large monkey who had broken out of his cage. At the end, the monkey

fell through the skylight with a resounding crash. The spectacle was worth the wait.

According to pictures and accounts, our grandmother Olga was lovely, but I have no direct recollection of her. Her sister, Tante Lucy, who was married to grandfather's brother, Eugen v.H., took us into her heart and became a wonderful substitute.

The Magnus Family and the "Castle" Holstein^{17*}

The sisters, Olga and Lucy Magnus, grew up on the beautiful farm, "Holstein," in a manor house built for Frederick the Great, the king of Prussia who fought the "Seven-Years War" that broke Austria's dominance in Germany. The farm was located at the estuary of the river Pregel below the capital city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad).

To arrive in Holstein as a child was a marvelous event: The carriage drawn by beautiful horses drove into a mighty courtyard around a circular lawn, on which a sundial and an old cannon rested, reminding one of royal times (see Figure 10). Looking from the veranda across the lovely gardens, one saw the ships from Russia and Germany passing by on their voyages to and from the Baltic Sea via Pillau.

The history of the Magnus family is by itself very interesting. In addition, it became a bone of contention among some of my father's colleagues during the Nazi period: were they Jews or non-Jews? The first known ancestor, Alexander Magnus, was royal Prussian health commissioner¹⁸ in the district Dobrin (now Dobricin in Poland). He lived in the little town of Simiatyce and died there as a Roman Catholic (23 March 1812). His wife, Therese, bore him three sons. Adolf (1785) studied medicine like his father, went into the Russian government service, was ennobled and married Dorothea von Leukfeld in Ukraine. Their daughter, my great-grandmother, Emilie von Magnus, was born in Odessa and there married my great-grandfather, Ferdinand Magnus, who was visiting from East Prussia. A brother of Emilie, Fedor von Magnus, became a Russian general and governor of Siberia. He was a very beloved uncle of my grandmother Olga, visited Holstein and died soon after his several-months-long return trip to Siberia. The Russian family branch became extinct with his death.

The manor, Gross-Holstein, was bought by my great-great grandfather, Adolf Gottfried Magnus, in 1835, after he had leased it since 1823. Adolf had studied law but switched to agriculture in 1806, after the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon. At that

* See Figure 11 for a map of East Prussia.

time, he also changed his church membership from the Lutheran to the Reform Church.

The Magnus family had two very interesting representatives in my generation, both of whom we knew well from visits at Holstein: Alfred was German Ambassador to Japan during World War I. Anneliese was a co-student of ours in Göttingen in 1919. She was very romantic and went to Spain to translate Cervantes. Instead she had an illegitimate daughter who later became a beauty queen of Spain and married an officer on Franco's General Staff. Anneliese herself first became a tourist guide and then a lawyer on the Island of Ibiza. During World War II, she was a law professor in Strasburg. In the late 1970's, Olga and I drove through Spain with her on a delightful summer expedition. She talked incessantly but full of wit.

East Prussian Vacations

Uncle Eugen and Tante Lucy von Hippel, respectively brother of our grandfather and sister of grandmother, adopted us more or less as their grandchildren after our grandmother's death. We had several wonderful summer vacations on their farm, "Kuglack," in East Prussia, which grandfather had helped them buy. The railroad trip from Göttingen via Berlin to Königsberg and on to Tapiau took almost two days and we had to catch the train in Göttingen at about 3 AM. The train stopped for only about two minutes and was always nearly filled up. To get us six plus a maid on board therefore required major strategy.

Catastrophe overtook us once: when the train stopped, father opted first for the rear of the train and then changed his mind in favor of the front. Mother, Olga and I were inside and the others were still outside when the train began to pull out. We succeeded in jumping out without getting killed and the family was left behind in the dark night. Father exploded, roaring at the cowering stationmaster and drawing sparks from the pavement with the iron tip of his walking stick -- a spectacle of awe-inspiring magnificence in the dark night. Then we sneaked home, stayed in hiding for the day as if we had left, jumped on board the next night and were off.

In Königsberg or Tapiau (see Figure 11), we were picked up by one or two carriages -- which, with their coachmen and prancing horses, appeared royal to us children -- and we drove along the tree-lined highways of the plain in the evening light.* An alley of old trees opened up, we passed a pond and there were the

* Sometimes we used also the local train from Tapiau to Labiau with its two stations at the farm: "Klein-Kuglack" and "Gross-Kuglack." The small-track railroad connecting the towns of Labiau and Tapiau with its two railroad stations on the farm -- a source of local pride -- was destined to play a role

far-ranging stables and barns with stork nests on their rooves. We saw Uncle Eugen and Tante Lucy already waiting on the porch of the lovely old house, jumped into their arms -- and were home (see Figures 12-15).

Any child, thus taken in, knows what paradise is. There was a wonderful park with old trees and secret hiding places; beyond it meadows dotted with roaming cows and horses stretched to the river Deime. Steamers, sailing ships and floats of huge logs passed by; we swam and fished with our friend, the gardener Faust (see Figure 16), and sat on his wagon selling fruits and vegetables in the nearest town. We tried to gather eggs from protesting hens, squeeze milk out of protesting cows and ride the big East Prussian horses with backs much too wide for our small legs. Obviously, catastrophes occurred: a hen flew into Fritz's face, he fell from a ladder held by his unhappy brother Arthur and transformed him into a premature pancake; the milking was ended by the plagued cow with a deft kick and a defiant discharge from other body openings into the pail; and, while parading as a proud rider on a broad-backed East Prussian horse before Uncle and Aunt, I was unseated with a crash as the big dog joyfully jumped at me.

Humiliations have to be taken in stride and may keep us from becoming intolerable. And in the evening, Uncle Eugen sat with us in his darkening study as a wonderful patriarch, spinning an exciting fairytale from day to day until Aunt Lucy appeared with a kerosene lamp, interrupting and bringing us from adventure-land down to earth and supper.

The Kuglacker "grandparents" had two children -- Uncle Walther and Aunt Gretchen -- who, with their offspring became interwoven with our later life. Uncle Walther v.H. (1872-1936)* was married to a Baroness Dörnberg (Tante Mia) and resided at that time as the county governor¹⁹ in an old castle at Labiau. Tante Gretchen's husband, Max Hoth, owned the farm Garbenincken near Kuglack. She and her two girls, Bienchen ("Sabina," 1910-) and Erika (1919-), were charming and gentle companions. In contrast, Uncle Max -- accustomed to the training of horses and cows -- was unwittingly a more dangerous playmate.

Castles and Coastlines

in world history. During World War I, the Russian offensive ground to a halt at the river Deime on the boundary of the farm. Field artillery from Königsberg was sent to Kuglack in the hope of delaying the Russian advance and also a cavalry unit was sent to tangle with the Russian Cossacks. By shifting the units around on the railroad at night, the impression of a strong opposing force was created, since air reconnaissance did not yet exist. The Russian advance came to a halt at the Deime River long enough to allow Hindenburg to bring up his armies and annihilate the Russian forces in the battles at Tannenberg and at the Masurian Lakes.

* The author of the turn-of-the-century family history.

There were other relatives strewn around in East and West Prussia with romantic connections to the past.

My great-grandfather, Wilhelm v.H. (1812-1860),* had married into the family Gerlach, which managed a beautiful Prussian state farm, "Domäne Fischhausen." Located on the "Frische Haff," an arm of the Baltic Sea, it was a children's paradise for rowing, swimming, hunting ducks, exploring a secret escape tunnel and playing with lively cousins.

More romantic still was a visit to relatives, von Schack, on the farm Wengern near the big historical Castle Marienburg -- a key fortification in the conquest of East Prussia by the German Knights.²⁰ The castle had a great refectory whose ceiling was supported by a single Gothic column. During a siege by the King of Poland, a traitor hung a handkerchief out of the window indicating the position of that column. A stone cannonball missed it by a hairbreadth while the knights were sitting at the table and half buried itself in the wall. There I saw it, sticking half out, a *memento mori* [reminder of mortality].

One final memory of the coastline of the Baltic Sea near Rauschen, where a very nice old Aunt Pauline lived with her daughter, Anna. Walking along the shore there, we could find beautiful pieces of amber washed by the waves out from the "blue earth" at the bottom of the sea -- remnants of an ancient forest. This petrified sap from trees that grew eons ago, frequently contained insects or seeds preserved from those prehistoric times. Unfortunately, when the exciting search after a storm yielded something really valuable, government inspectors walking the beaches confiscated the find for the Prussian state. Frederick the Great had declared amber a government monopoly in order to pay for the Seven-Years War.

There existed also a Prussian amber mine in Palmnicken, not far away, where small pieces of amber were transformed into a precious lacquer. A distant uncle was for a time the director.

Homes and Schools

After renting for some years, Father decided to have his own house built at the eastern edge of the town of Göttingen. A distant cousin (Götte) became the architect and our family house was created at Hoher-Weg 2 (now Hermann Foege Weg 2, see Figure 17). It is a very unusual high-ranging structure built from fieldstone edged with sandstone -- apparently for eternity. The front yard is relatively small and elevated. It is reached from the road via steep sandstone stairs.

* His father, my great-great grandfather, Hans Ludwig v.H., died in 1813 in the war against Napoleon while leading his battalion across the Elbe.

The large backyard, full of trees and flowers, is overlooked by a two-story veranda. We moved in on 26 September 1904 -- the tenth wedding anniversary of our parents.*

For half a year before moving in, we lived in another rented house on the Friedländerweg (No. 55) not far from our grandfather. It was named by us children the "Owl's Nest"²¹ because a large picture of an owl had been painted on the porch wall by the previous occupant. Memories of several interesting experiences are still in my mind. A horse-drawn carriage rammed a stone wall across the street and left horses and wagon strewn over the ground in tangles. A trumpeter appeared past midnight at the corner blowing his bugle to call out the volunteer fire brigade. Also, a water main broke in the house while we were sitting in the bathtub one evening, and the water cascaded down the stairs into the street nearly swamping our astonished parents who returned from a party in the nick of time.

We were probably relatively mischievous brats. For example, we learned about human nature by dropping a purse on a very thin string over a stone wall and watching how the finders looked right and left before stealthily picking up the "valuable" find. At the last moment we pulled the purse away full of glee in our hideout. One day, a disappointed student jumped over the fence and gave us a severe thrashing -- an appropriate ending for this social experiment.

My brothers went to a private school run by a slightly formidable character, Herr Heumann. However, by the time I was ready, a public primary school had just opened. I was extremely lucky in having a wonderful teacher -- Herr Engelke -- who guided me through its three years and became my friend for life (see Figure 18). After World War II, in his old age, he wrote that he would hold on until he had seen me again -- and so he did. On my first return with Daggie,** the coffee table was set every day in his house for my possible appearance. He died a few weeks after we left for America.

When we moved into our new house, I suddenly disappeared from sight. Electric light had just been invented by Professor Nernst:*** a small rare-earth tube became a semi-conductor when preheated by a metal wire strung through its center hole and flared up suddenly, giving a brilliant light. A "Nernst Lamp" was installed in our mother's room, and I was found enthralled, switching it on and off, on and off. Later in life I made such a Nernst lamp myself with Nernst's old laboratory handyman and was able to explain its previously only-empirically-understood conduction mechanism.

* The house was sold in the spring of 1985, when Olga moved to the Wohnstift Göttingen (a retirement home).

** Dagmar v. H., Arthur's wife.

*** Walther Hermann Nernst (1864-1941) won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1920.

Professor Nernst, at that time Director of the Institute for Physical Chemistry in Göttingen, became an admired figure. He sold his splendid invention for a million marks just before the tungsten lamp made it obsolete. Due to his resulting affluence, he owned one of the first automobiles. I can still see Nernst and my father driving together to the hunt in this high-wheeled contraption -- Nernst at the steering wheel and my father standing next to him, blowing a trumpet to warn people and animals away.

After completing grammar school, we three boys went for nine years into the "humanistische Gymnasium" in Göttingen. There a strange consortium of teachers imparted a really good classical education, including nine years of Latin and six years of Greek. These old teachers were indeed a collection of rare human specimens: There was a "professor" of religion who assured us that he had just eaten the "Holy Ghost" in the form of a dove. There was an art teacher pinching us with dirty fingernails, inquiring whether or not we had "blue spots." He then settled down for a sleep after writing "Zart [delicate]" on the blackboard -- to admonish us how to paint. The history teacher illustrated world events in unforgettable phrases like: "but then Rome was sitting up on its hind-legs and Carthage had to bite into the sour apple;" and the French teacher drilled into us sentences about closing post offices and -- if, when in Paris, you needed to go to the toilet -- go "par la fenêtre" [out the window]. The music teacher went berserk at sour notes and threw you under the grand piano; and the natural science teacher, an old gentleman with blue glasses, had us enter class dramatically, carrying stuffed animals and a fish skeleton (with which I unfortunately fell down the stairs).

Still we learned lots and the general requirements were high. When I was in first grade and downtown Göttingen became flooded in a grand display of the Leine River, I had to write a dramatic account of the scene including babies floating away in their cradles -- *in Latin* (see Figure 19). Also science and mathematics were taught excellently, an old gymnastics teacher introduced us into the "Youth Movement," and two young teachers became my close friends. Unfortunately, all three died heroically in World War I.

Liquidation of the Victorian Age by the "Youth Movement"

We grew up in the atmosphere portrayed in the English TV series, "Upstairs, Downstairs:" a cook and a chambermaid worked in the basement, slept in the attic and were called by the ringing of a bell. They were young girls from neighboring villages or from downtown. My mother took their education as future housewives charmingly in hand and they became beloved friends of us children. Also our

grandfather brought a highly respected East Prussian maid into our lives, the "Alte Luise." She had joined the family at the age of sixteen, took care of grandfather from grandmother's death until he died and lived the remainder of her life in a small apartment in Göttingen, loved by us all. Her cry, when she helped mother: "Everywhere climbing roses and nowhere a place to shake out your dust cloth!" still rings in my ears.

The old Victorian precept: "children should be seen but not heard," led to our separation at supper from the grownups. Ignorance of nutritional requirements produced a standard supper of semolina pap [porridge],²² crowned by a piece of sugar in the center -- an island in a lake of milk. The result was curved backbones for us three boys -- later partially corrected by strenuous exercises. In addition, all kinds of childhood diseases struck, which could only be fought by inadequate medical means such as the puncturing of eardrums. In all such emergencies, our wonderful family doctor, "Uncle Droysen," appeared in his horse-drawn carriage to take care of the situation. He also cheered up the patient with masterful drawings whose development was full of surprises. For instance, a fox returning to his den under the ruined Castle Plesse with a chicken in his mouth was drawn starting with the tail and side effects, until suddenly with a few masterful strokes the total scene unfolded. We became friends for life and I took his picture in World War I, standing in uniform before his emergency hospital, looking like Doctor Doolittle.

Only when our appendices were removed, did we enter the hospital. This happened to our mother and all four children in the course of about two years. Since Father got excited easily, a standard procedure developed: the deed was done when he had to travel to Celle for the "Junior Barrister Examination." Upon his return, one of the children would meet him at the railroad station to inform him that he should visit the hospital instead of coming home directly.

Initially, these appendectomies created wide commiseration and the victim was showered with presents; but repetition hardens the bystander. When Fritz, as No. 5, awoke with the whispered request, "visitors I do not want, but presents can be brought in" -- alas, there were no presents. The family had to fake the deep concern of the community.

Our father had expected that we would "behave normally," i.e., walk with him, wearing long pants and a hat, and listen with polite attention to his discourse. Suddenly this dream was shattered: around 1910 we became rebellious and joined the "Youth Movement."

The Youth Movement and Its Ideals

The Victorians -- as is now generally known through the English TV series, "Upstairs, Downstairs" -- were a "class state" with special privileges for the upper crust, slightly balanced by some social obligations. Men went to school in free public institutions (Volks-Schule) for a six-year course. Later they were liable for three years of military service and could reach a top rank of Master Sergeant. A nine-year course in a Mittel-Schule ended with qualification for one year of service (Einjähriger). Only a twelve-year course in an expensive "classical Gymnasium" or a more scientific-technical "Ober-Realschule" led to a diploma (Abiturium) for a university or an officer's career. The result was a class state, where upper and lower classes lived essentially separate lives without much mutual intermingling or understanding. This led to appalling exploitation in the industrial age -- especially of child labor.

The educational effort was essentially concentrated on boys. Girls of the upper crust went to finishing schools that taught mainly fine arts and social graces. Those of the lower classes were supposed to feel privileged when accepted as maids in upper-class households. Social services were minimal and beggars abounded.

The reaction to this state of affairs occurred at several levels. Marx and Engels with their Socialist Manifesto* started the Social-Democratic labor movement, which led to years of bloody fighting in industry. The Fabians in England, including George Bernard Shaw, tried to provide some leadership. Simultaneously, the Suffragettes in England -- an organized ladies group -- began to fight for women's rights. And, in Germany, around the beginning of the 20th century, the Youth Movement started. This movement was later paralleled by the Boy Scouts in England -- who were organized along more military lines by their founder, a colonel. (The Boy Scouts subsequently spread to the Continent and to the USA.)

We called ourselves "Wandervögel" [migrant birds], as we hiked through Germany and neighboring countries, sleeping in barns, helping with farm chores, rediscovering and collecting old folk songs, cooking outdoors, playing forgotten instruments (such as guitars and mandolins) along with lutes, flutes and violins -- and making friends everywhere (see Figure 20). Plays were staged in churches and small abandoned houses -- and later even old castles were fixed up as stopping places for transient groups. And, while the normal size of a hiking group ranged from five to ten boys, thousands sometimes came together for special festivals and war games.

In retrospect, it sounds strange that we sometimes staged "war games" and, in addition to lovely ballads and folk songs, sang others with lines such as "victoriously we will beat the French and die like heroes." But Europe at that time

* Now known as the "Communist Manifesto" (1848).

was still full of nationalistic feelings and strains. These were therefore natural aberrations without a deeper apparent meaning -- until World War I broke out.

The very strict ethical code of the Youth Movement was formally ratified in the summer of 1913 at a large conclave at the mountain, Meissner, not far from Göttingen. A solemn pledge was given to live a life of purity, responsibility and mutual helpfulness. This promise has guided us ever since.

The first large-scale test of this oath came soon thereafter, during World War I. The people of the Youth Movement were allowed to wear, by special permission, an identifying green-red-gold cord on their uniforms. While normally the gap between officers and men was wide, this sign made us immediate friends, quite independently of rank. On airplanes flown by members of the Youth Movement, the griffin* symbol of our badges was frequently painted as a mark of identification. The Youth Movement lost more than 10,000 members in combat during World War I -- about half its strength. If they had lived, the assumption of power by the Nazis and World War II might never have occurred.

Family Scenes Before World War I

I was the only child with experimental inclinations in our family. This enabled me to install batteries and wire up my own private lighting system, which allowed me to read after the electric light had been turned off to get us to sleep. That was tolerated but other experiments found less approval.

We used carbide lamps when riding bicycles after dark. The carbide, when moistened with water by a dripping mechanism, produced acetylene gas, which burned with a brilliant light. I tried to make a bomb by putting carbide in an empty beer bottle, pouring water on top and closing it rapidly. It proved only too effective and nearly cut my left thumb off. My poor mother came just in the nick of time to have me sewn up in the hospital. However, the experiment had a long-term advantage: previously I had difficulties telling right from left. From then on, the scar on my left thumb proved an unfailing guide.

Making a fire in the coal cellar did not find much approval either. The climax was reached, however, when the devil moved me to disturb Father's nap. He used to retire to the couch in his study after lunch and put a black band over his eyes. Absolute silence had to reign in the house for the next hour. I had by that time become acquainted with a fireworks-bomb named the "Thunderclap" and thought it

* A mythical animal with the head, foreparts and wings of an eagle, and body, hind legs and tail of a lion.

would prove interesting to set it off in the closed basement at that "holy hour." The result surpassed all expectations. Our house shook as in an earthquake and with a roar my father appeared, racing after me as I dashed into the garden. Feeling outmatched, I quickly hid behind a tree and trembled as my father roared around the house, passing me several times. When he returned empty handed to his room, I felt elated but conscience stricken and followed him up and gave myself up. Unfortunately, the reward for this heroic gesture was a sound thrashing.

Numerous additional scenes come to mind, showing that we were healthy problems:

- While staying at our grandfather's house when our parents went on vacation, we three boys got into a fistfight and knocked the burning kerosene lamp to the floor. Only divine intervention plus "Alte Luise" prevented a major disaster.
- Since father and grandfather were ardent hunters, we were initiated early into the handling of weapons through target practice with air guns. From our third floor window in grandfather's house, we used this skill to keep dogs passing on the street in highly-accelerated motion.
- The air gun, without bullet, once also proved handy to muzzle our sister when she was scolding us from the kitchen through a speaking-tube while we were doing our homework in the dining room. The air blast sent the age-old dust in the tube into her open mouth, ending the controversy with a gurgling cry and a sound spanking for the perpetrator.

However, in many other ways -- I hope -- we were a joy.

Our grandfather Bremer should also be mentioned as a cause of adventure. He was a self-made man, who had worked himself up from poor circumstances to Professor of Law. He fell in love with our grandmother, the daughter of a high official in Rostock, Herr Erxleben, President of the Senate of the Mecklenburg section of the Justice Department. Our grandfather was extremely absent-minded, however. When he arrived in Rostock by train to ask for grandmother's hand, he deposited his black high hat in one horse-drawn carriage, went off after a forgotten bag -- which he placed in a second carriage, and then climbed into a third. As a result, he appeared before the house of his beloved leading a cavalcade of three carriages. Nevertheless, he got her and they were happy for sixteen years, until tuberculosis claimed her. After grandmother's death, our mother took care of grandfather Bremer and, after mother's marriage, an old aunt, Tante Buss, took over (see Figure 21).

Grandfather's custom was to take a trolley car home after his lecture at the university and read his newspaper on the way. Once, coming out from his lecture, a water wagon was standing at the accustomed stop before the university. Not noticing the substitution, he seated himself on it. Quietly surrounded by his admiring students, he read his paper for the standard 10 minutes and then looked

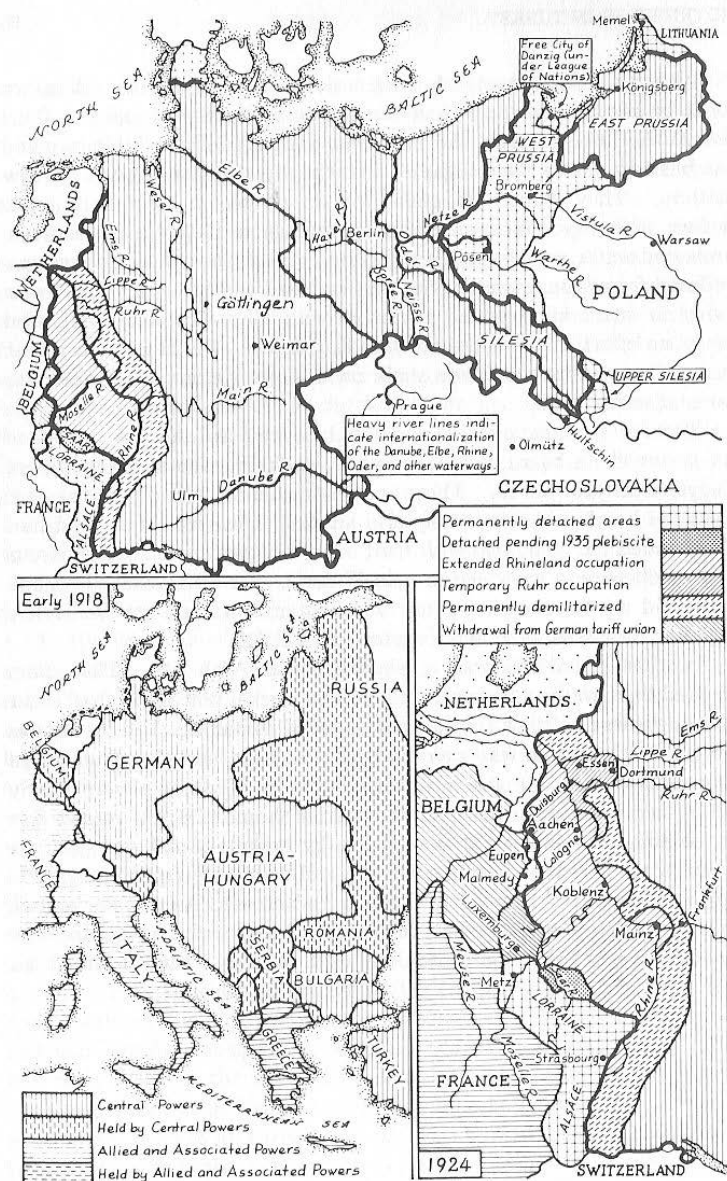
up. Loudly cheered by the crowd, he then climbed down with great dignity and went home. The story was told that, as a youngster, he had carried ammunition to the barricades in the German revolution of 1848. I hope he did not mix up friend and enemy.

In 1913, Fritz and I were invited to spend our summer vacation with grandfather Bremer. We learned to love him -- but also to be childishly embarrassed by his eccentricities.

Grandfather Bremer's housekeeper was similarly absent-minded. She took us to the cathedral at Cologne in her underwear and destroyed our faith in the 700 holy virgins whose skulls are exhibited there in glass cases, by suggesting that they were probably silk-covered dog skulls. Subsequently, we spent a lovely week with grandfather in the "Sieben-Gebirge" [seven mountains] where he -- nearly deaf -- expressed his opinions about the ladies in the dining room from the toilet in a stentorian voice.

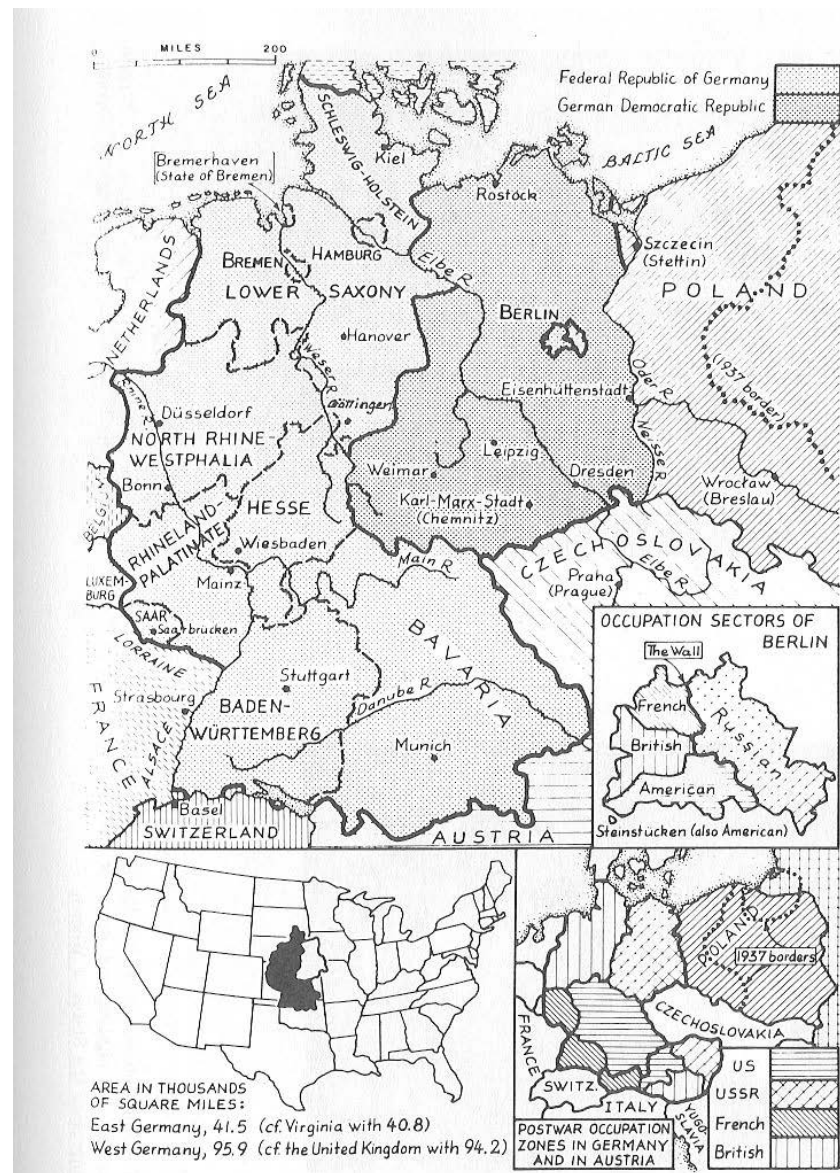
When grandfather Bremer died in 1916, he had worked for many years on the biography of a famous predecessor, Savigny. Because the ancestors had proved so interesting, he had just arrived at the youth of his subject. He was a lovable man.

1. Dr. Jur. Walther von Hippel, *Geschichte der Familie von Hippel: Part I* (Berlin: Berlin Buchdruckerei A. G., 1898); *Part II* (Königsberg, 1912). Ted and David von Hippel have updated the family tree to 1988.
2. Prommitzer Rat und Erbherr.
3. Lehensgu"ter.
4. Kurfürstentum.
5. Uradel.
6. Geheimer Kämmerer.
7. Kurfürst -- one of the electors of the Holy Roman Emperor.
8. Geheimer Sekretarius.
9. Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, *On Improving the Status of Women* (1792), translated by Timothy F. Sellner (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979). See also one of the best-sellers of its time, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, *Über die Ehe [On Marriage]* (1774), (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1972). Theodor Gottlieb himself remained a bachelor.
10. "Aufruf an mein Volk," reprinted on pp. 69-70 of Part II of the family history.
11. Kant und seine Tafelrunde.
12. Sabine Hoth, *Bericht Über die Flucht von Garbeningen in Ostpreussen nach Hessen [Report on the Flight from Garbeningen in East Prussia to Hesse]*, 20 January to 1 October 1945." AvH and Paul von Hippel have both translated. Sabine Hoth lives near Frankfurt with her sister, Erika Bruch: 06103-4710 Feldstrasse 1/ 6073 Egelbach, West Germany.
13. From frontispiece of *Geschichte der Familie von Hippel*.
14. In Latin, this saying goes, *non videri, sed esse*, and in French: "plus être que paraître."
15. Extra-ordinarius.
16. Landes-University.
17. Schloss Holstein.
18. Kreisphysikus.
19. Landrat.
20. Ritter.
21. Eulenbutze.
22. "Gries brei."



1a. Pre-World War II Germany.

Germany: a) Pre WWII



1b. Post-World War II Germany.

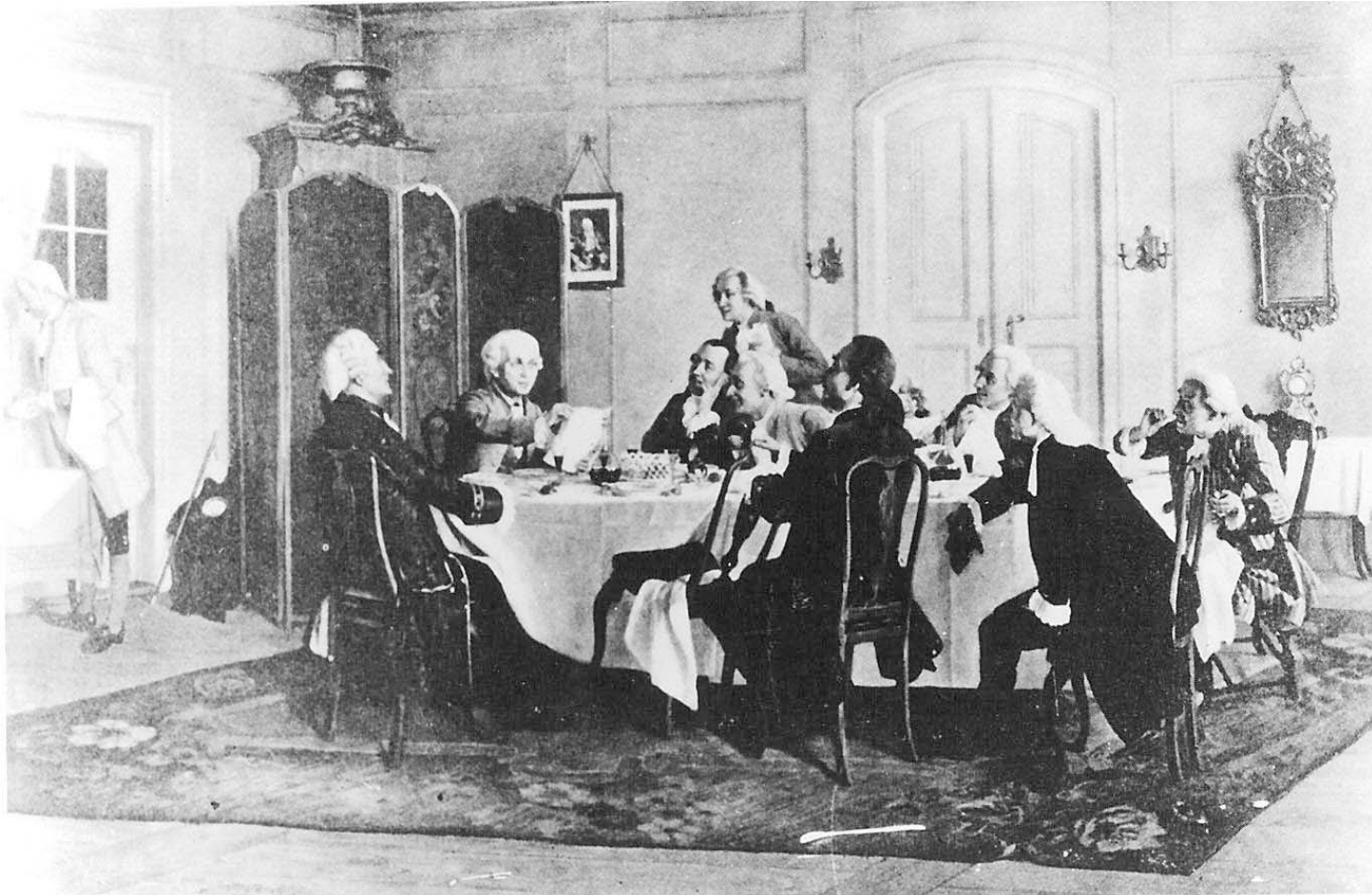
b) Post WWII



2. Theodore Gottlieb von Hippel the elder (1741-96)
Mayor of Königsberg
Author of *Improving the Status of Women*



3. Theodore Gottlieb von Hippel the younger (1775-1843)
Author "call to arms" of Prussians against Napoleon (1812)



4. Kant and his round table
(painting by Emil Dörstling)



5. von Hippel family
Coat of Arms



6. Emma Bremer von Hippel
(1871-1925) and her sister, Marie



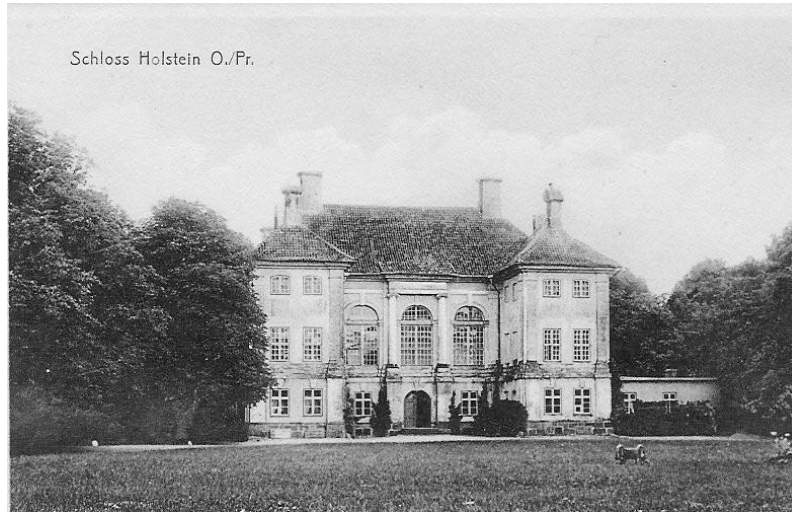
7. Emma and Robert von Hippel with
their three sons (Dec. 1900)
(left to right: Arthur, Fritz and Ernst)



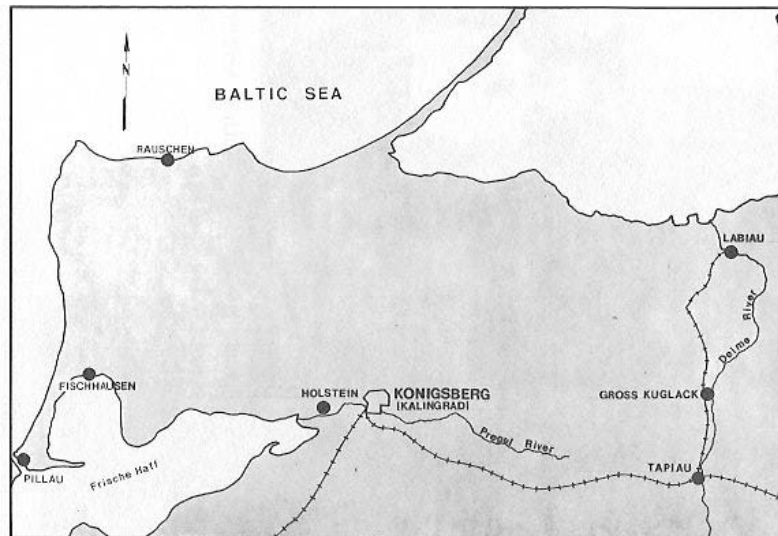
8. Grandparents Arthur and Olga von Hippel and their three sons (from left to right: Eugen, Richard and Robert) with Professor and Mrs. Roentgen (Roentgens on right, 1884)



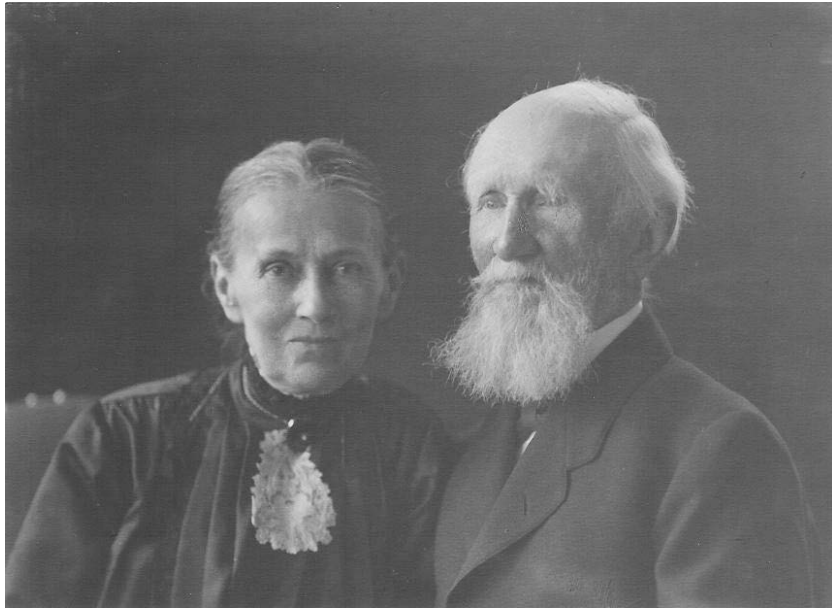
9. Grandfather Arthur von Hippel and his children and grandchildren on the occasion of his 65th birthday (1906)



10. Holstein Castle, home of grandmother Magnus and her sister, Lucy



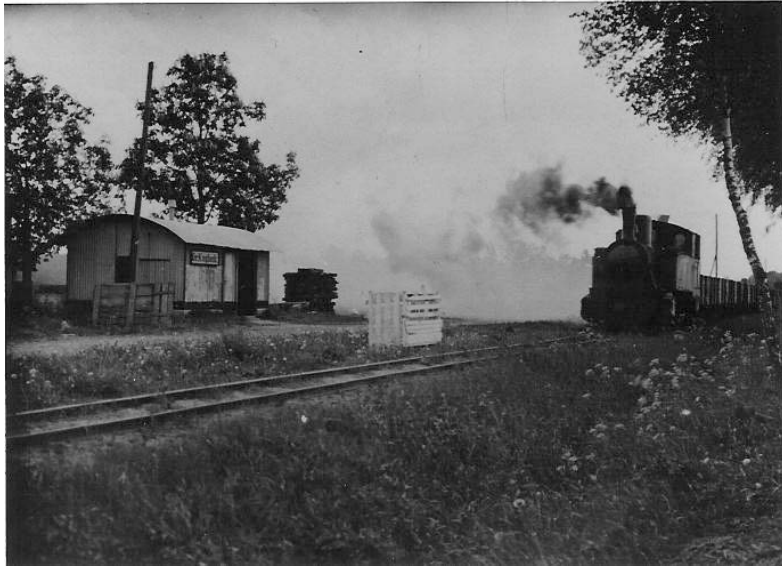
11. Königsberg Area of East Prussia



12. Great Aunt Lucy and
Great Uncle Eugen von Hippel



13. Gross Kuglac, home of
Eugen and Lucy von Hippel



14. The railroad station at Kleine Kuglac

15. A barn at Kleine Kuglac with stork's nest (and stork)

16. The gardner, Faust



17. The family home in Göttingen
(now Herman Foege Weg 2)



18.Herr Engelke, my beloved
grammar-school teacher and life-long
friend, before a picture of the
Town Musicians of Bremen



19. Göttingen flooded by the
Leine River (1909)



20. Wangervögel group
floating down the River Main
on a raft of logs (1912)



21. Grandfather Peter Bremer,
Professor of Law in Bonn