

# **MA, MOTHER AND ME**

**A MEMOIR**



**By**

**Marge Huneke Blaine**

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# MA, MOTHER AND ME

## A MEMOIR

### Chapter 9 Germany and the Germans 1953

In the summer of 1953 the Stained Glass Association convention was held in Chartres, France. Carl agreed to go, and Lee made the plans. They would join the Association in Paris, and tour Chartres and the surrounding area with the group. Then they would go to Lucerne, Switzerland alone to enjoy a part of Europe that had not been heavily bombed during World War II. Since the war ended in 1945, most countries were recovering slowly from the destruction. Finally, they would go to Germany to visit Daddy's family and stop in London on the way home.

Mother reminded Daddy of his promise to her. "Do you remember, Carl? You told me long ago that someday we would go to Austria together to get my birth certificate. I still want to do that. Will you go with me to Vienna where I was born, and then to the village where I grew up?" Daddy was truly concerned. The war was over, Germany had been defeated, but the "Cold War" was raging. At the end of World War II, Russia claimed many countries, including half of Germany. Austria, like Germany, was divided into four zones. Vienna, like Berlin, was deep in the Soviet Zone of occupation. The city was also divided into four occupation zones, like Berlin, but the central First District was under four-power authority.

Even though my father was a naturalized American citizen, he spoke English with a German accent. He feared that some mistake would occur if he went to Austria where Communist authorities could detain him. Lee argued, "But Carl, you're an American citizen. You have your American passport. They have no reason to detain you." "I know. But I'm still afraid. You can go and speak English like a real American and you'll never be stopped. But if I open my mouth, with my German accent, they'll automatically hold me for questioning." They argued about it. He understood why she wanted to go to Austria, but he could not agree to go with her. He would stay in Munich in West Germany. She would travel alone to Austria to try to get her birth papers.

In June, my parents left for Europe. This was Mother's first trip back to Europe since she had been stolen from her classroom in Schiltern by her mother in 1915 when she was nine years old. Daddy had never returned since he emigrated twenty-five years earlier. It was an emotional journey for both of them. The propeller plane's long trip included several stops before landing in Paris. The Stained Glass Association had tours, evening dinners and other entertainment planned for the group. They saw the Eiffel Tower, the Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Palace of Versailles. One evening they attended the Folies Bergere, with beautiful women and men, performing semi-nude. At the end of their Paris visit, the group traveled to Chartres, fifty-five miles away, where the entire group shared a last banquet together. Mother was proud of Daddy and was never shy about boasting of his successes, but Daddy was

relieved that the meetings were over. He interpreted her pride in him as relentless assertiveness during the entire Convention. He thought she was bragging and promised himself that he would never attend another Stained Glass Association Convention. And he never did.

Leaving France they traveled to Lucerne, Switzerland, where they relaxed at a beautiful hotel overlooking the lake. Here Mother satisfied her cravings to buy beautiful things. They had enough money and Mother felt if you couldn't buy it, you couldn't enjoy it. She bought perfumes in Paris and a Rolex wristwatch with diamonds for herself in Switzerland. It would go well with the full-length wild mink fur coat she had bought the winter before. She indulged herself with music boxes, carved wood pieces, and lace table linens that would last for generations.

Daddy said nothing, but thought to himself, "She worked right along with me and helped earn everything we have. She should buy what she wants. We can certainly afford it." But when she bought huge lace tablecloths, napkins and doilies, with service for eighteen, he reached the end of his patience. "Who is going to use all of this? We don't eat like this?" She lifted her chin and stared at him airily. "You never know. Marge might get married someday and she will probably need all of this." He folded his arms across his chest, shook his head in amazement and whistled a tune as he paced aimlessly, waiting for her to finish.

When they arrived in Germany they rented a car. Mother was a good driver and they wanted to drive to visit Daddy's family. Mother chose a large Opel sedan, which would comfortably fit her girth and provide enough room to hold all the family passengers they would be with, but now Daddy put his foot down. "I have put up with all your extravagances and your outrageous bragging during the Convention. I have put up with your buying, buying, buying as if you can't get enough of all that Europe has to sell but I will put up with it no more." She listened as he continued his tirade. "I am now returning to *my* home. This is *my* family. I don't want any more bragging. I don't want you to show off how much we have. No more!" Mother said nothing as she signed the papers to rent a small Volkswagon. She had difficulty fitting her large bosom behind the wheel, even with the seat moved all the way back, but she made it work. She worried about how they would have room to drive with the family members in Achim, but she said nothing.

She drove carefully at first but soon discovered the little VW handled easily and the roads were good. The drive through Germany revealed a country still in recovery but they were happy to see that there was much reconstruction and much preservation in the eleven years since the end of World War II. As they traveled north toward Achim bei Bremen, they saw less destruction in the rural areas. They arrived in Achim, the village of his childhood, which he had not seen for more than twenty-five years. They went directly to his mother's home at #13 Feld Strasse.

Johanna was in her eighties, but was still healthy. They had last seen her when she left San Francisco just before the war. She held him in her arms as if she couldn't let go. Then she looked at him closely and held his face in her hands. "Carl, Carl, I didn't know if I would see you again." Martha, though older, was still an attractive woman and introduced them to her

husband, Heinz Lohmann and her son, Carl's namesake, Karl Heinz. He was six years old, both shy and belligerent, and refused to greet them. Heinz, however, was a jovial friendly man. Both Johanna and Martha greeted Mother warmly, remembering her many kindnesses to them in San Francisco. Mother thought to herself that Daddy was lucky to be able to return to this home where he was born and grew up. He was lucky to have a brother to visit and other family still here in Achim, who could reminisce with him. She longed for that and hoped she too would find it in Schiltern

After visiting for a while, my parents climbed into their rented VW and drove to Carl's brother's house where they would stay, since the habitable part of Johanna's house was too small. Carl was overcome with both joy and sadness as Lee drove through the streets of Achim. Though it was changed, there had been little destruction during the war. Some of the shops looked prosperous, but many were still dark and empty.

They arrived at Hans and Gerda's home at #8 Goethe Strasse. Hans hurried out the door to meet his brother. They had not seen each other since the day Carl left in 1924. Each had lived through inflation, depression, war, had married and now had grown children. They embraced and then looked at each other and laughed. Mother smiled as she watched the two of them together. Their faces looked so much alike. Gerda, with their two sons, Horst, 19, and Hans Gerhart, 16, hurried out to the car too. They all exchanged warm greetings and Lee felt enveloped by the family.

They walked into the house and soon were having a good time together. Gerda prepared a German meal, which everyone enjoyed. They spent the evening reminiscing. Lee listened to Hans and smiled to herself. She had found another version of Carl. Hans was less reserved, more relaxed, with an easy smile and laugh. Carl's brother was fun to be with. And the boys. They were each so different. Hans Gerhart, the younger, looked like his father, Hans, and his Uncle Carl, and had an easy going personality. The elder son, Horst, looked more like his mother Gerda and seemed to have her personality. Soon Gerda was confiding in Lee and the two of them were laughing at anecdotes about the brothers, their husbands.

They squeezed into the Volkswagon often to go out to dinner or to visit relatives. Carl was in the front seat next to Lee, Gerda and the two boys in the back as Hans led them on his motorcycle, since there was no room for him in the little car. Horst thought to himself that it was strange that the Americans could only afford to rent a little Volkswagon. He thought they were rich. He had heard his uncle was successful in America, but maybe not? He thought they could at least rent a car like an Opel sedan, if not a Mercedes. He decided to watch, listen and learn more.

Carl enjoyed revisiting the scenes of his childhood in Achim with Hans. Carl and Lee drove to Hamburg to visit his oldest sister Anna and her husband Heinrich Henke. Lee had always known them as "the honey people" since Heinrich had a flourishing business as a honey trader. They were still recovering from the hardships of the war. They greeted Lee and Carl warmly. As Lee talked with Anna about her life, she understood that this woman had worked hard alongside her husband – just as she had in the grocery store for many years. Anna and Heinrich had been successful and enjoyed many of the better things in life. They had an

automobile, much larger than the Volkswagon, so they used Heinrich's car when they traveled around Hamburg. The Henke's were curious about their successful American relatives who could only afford to rent an uncomfortable Volkswagon, but they said nothing.

Their grown children Kathe, and her husband, August Brandt, and Annaliese and her husband Willie Linné were delightful people and Lee and Carl enjoyed their company. August was particularly jovial and often poked fun in a gentle way at his stuffy brother in law, Heinrich Henke III and Heinrich's wife, Karla. Heinrich III was a Municipal Judge and Karla shamefully put on airs. Heinrich and Karla had the first Henke grandchild, Hannelore, one year old.

After leaving Hamburg, my parents drove to Sweden to visit Carl's older sister Hanni in Göteborg. Carl met her husband, Gustav Swenson and their twenty-five year old son, Gunnar, for the first time. They were there only a few minutes before they realized that Hanni's son was a disaster. He was rather tall, thin with a sunken chest, drooping posture, an oily, pimply skin, and lank greasy dark blonde hair which fell over his bespectacled eyes. If they were close to him they noticed that he smelled. In fact, he smelled awful! Sometimes he looked at them vacantly, sometimes furtively.

They talked for a short time before Gunnar dropped a bombshell. "I am interested in visiting America." It was like dropping a cow pie in the middle of the living room. Carl gingerly stepped around the topic by not answering. But not Lee! She was intrigued at the thought. Here was an obvious misfit. Here was a reject. Here was an inadequate human being who desperately needed a major change in his life to turn him into a normal human being. She thought to herself, "I am the person who can make him change. I know how it feels to be rejected. With my help this boy can change his life. I'm going to do it!" Carl noticed her interest but nudged her, warning her to be silent.

She had heard tales from Carl about Hanni losing her first baby, a girl, Vera, who died at the age of six months. About two years later she had a son, Gunnar. He was a delicate boy and she dressed him in girl's clothes. With a slight build, his long blonde hair and blue eyes, he resembled a girl for quite a few years. That gave Hanni much comfort, but clearly was a disaster. Alone in the car as they left Göteborg, Carl said to Lee, "Don't you dare make plans to bring that boy to America. Not even for a visit. Don't even think about it. He's a *svedot!*" But Mother said, "I think it might be good for him to get away from home and from Hanni. I think that's what's wrong with him." Daddy scowled and shook his head. "I said no, Lee. No. And that's final."

Back in Achim, they revisited the family, and spoke with Johanna and Martha to determine what repairs were needed to make 13 Feld Strasse habitable, and produce an income. Lee and Carl agreed to send \$3,000 to build a new kitchen and bathroom, and to add a rental unit. Tearfully, Johanna said goodbye to her son. She feared she would never see him again and she was right. She died a few years later on October 25, 1957 at age ninety-one.

The cost eventually reached \$6,000 as most renovation projects do, but Lee well understood. When she explained to Carl, he had long since given up arguing about money to fix properties,

so he simply shrugged his shoulders in resignation. After all, it was my parent's idea to build a rental unit, to provide an income for Johanna and Martha for the rest of their lives.

They said goodbye to Hans and Gerda and their sons Horst and Hans Gerhard. Horst was only nineteen but he spoke to my parents cautiously about opportunities in America. "I know I don't want to do anything like my father did. He was a borer – a well driller – and was always away from home. I never knew him as a father. I don't want to live my life like that. I want to live with my family – whatever work I do. Maybe I will be a salesman in a store or something like that." Carl described his stained glass studio and Horst seemed interested. "I'm good with my hands. I know how to do many things with my hands. But I don't want to be an engineer. Nothing like my father did. I want to be sure of that. But I think I would like to do what you do. I think I would be good at that." They left with Carl's words in the air, "Well, we'll see what comes of it. We'll see. You need to finish your education here first." Carl was not about to commit to anything too quickly.

They left Achim and drove to Munich. While they drove, they talked about Horst and the possibility of his coming to America to work in the stained glass studio. Daddy warmed to the subject. He thought his nephew Horst might carry on the studio he had founded. He was sure now that Margaret was not interested in it, and her friend Terry Blaine was studying chemical engineering. Even though Horst had no native artistic talent, Carl could teach him everything he needed to know. By the time they arrived in Munich Carl had already mentally accepted the idea that if Margaret and Terry were not interested, he might ask Horst to come to America to work with him at Century Stained Glass Studio – not right away perhaps, but some day.

Once they were in Munich, Lee hired a driver with the help of the American Embassy. The driver could get her through the Communist border into Austria and Vienna. Carl stayed in Munich, since he dared not risk being held in Austria. There was still a Cold War in Europe and U S-Russia relations were fragile at best. At the border she and her driver were delayed, and both they and the car were diligently searched by soldiers with rifles. The border was marked by huge barbed wire fences and high guard posts near the roads every one quarter mile. From the guard posts, soldiers pointed their machine guns down at the cars on the roads. This controlled access was very efficient. Very few were permitted in without impeccable credentials. And *no one* was permitted out without those same impeccable credentials.

Eventually Lee and her driver were allowed to pass through since she had an American passport, an Austrian visa, an American Embassy driver and she looked and talked like an American. During World War II, Austria was occupied by the German Third Reich. At the end of the war, the Russian army reached Austria first. All the other Allies had to deal with the Russians through endless negotiations. Once across the border Lee and her driver headed straight for Vienna, which was under the governance of four countries. U.S, Russia, Britain and France. That coalition was unwieldy, but kept a western presence in a politically confused country.

Ma had told Mother that she, Leopoldine, was an only child born March 2, 1887 in Vienna to Leopold Moser and Charlotte Fastenbauer. Leopold Moser was in the lumber business in the Zieletaal area and they lived in Leobersdorf. Lee went to both and inquired in the police

stations and district government centers, but the clerks told her that many records were lost in the bombing during the war and Moser was a common name in Austria. The Communist government was in control and they had little interest in sharing past records with anyone.

Lee went to Neustift am Wald in 18 Bezirk, (the Eighteenth District) where Leopoldine said she lived with her husband, Michael Moser. Leopoldine had told Lee that Lee's father was a dentist and had died of influenza at age 28 in 1908, when Lee was eighteen months old. Lee went to the largest Catholic Church in the Eighteenth District and spoke to the oldest priest in the Church. She told him her story, ending with the question: was Leopoldine Moser really her mother, or had she been kidnapped from Schiltern at age nine by a stranger? The kindly priest told her he would try to find documentation, but it was very hard these days. He did tell her that he remembered sending a young girl to a kind family in Schiltern many years ago. The family's name was Eckarter and they were wealthy farmers with grown children of their own. Mother was excited at this information because she remembered the Eckarter family name.

The Church had little money and most of their time and efforts were spent simply working hard to survive. The Communists only tolerated the Church and few, except the elderly, even attended services. Young people who wanted to succeed in Communist countries stayed far away from churches, or at least churches that were visible to those in power. The priest thought he could find the records she wanted, but it would take time – and money. She told him she would pay whatever he needed to find information for her and they agreed on an amount. She felt powerless to do any more and could only hope this old priest would be able to find information for her. She laughed to herself that Ma said she never paid the church for her care all the years she was in Schiltern, but Mother hoped she had now paid the debt. She thought the money she left was at least enough to pay for her care those years she lived with the Eckarters in Schiltern.

She asked her driver if there was any chance they might be able to drive to Schiltern. She would give anything to see the village again and perhaps find the Eckarter's house and someone who might remember her. He told her all roads were closed to automobiles and it would be impossible for them to get there even on back roads. He told her it would be safest for them to leave Austria on the same road they had entered since that was what her papers permitted them to do.

Mother left Vienna without seeing Schiltern. She had wanted to see the Eckarters again – the kind people who had cared for her. She recalled the warmth of their home and their love – memories that she had almost forgotten. She wanted to see the church in Schiltern with the one hundred steps that she climbed as a child. She wanted to see the schoolhouse where she sat the day she was stolen. She hoped she would remember it all if she saw it. In her mind she saw her classroom – her teacher at the front of the room – the other children – she even smelled the chalkboard. She still remembered the day Leopoldine marched in the door, saying that Poldi's mother was waiting for her at the church. She wanted to see it all again, but the Communists permitted none of it.



Daddy worried constantly while Mother was gone. When she returned two days later, she was triumphant, but subdued. “Well, Carli I have no birth certificate in my hand, but I found the priest, who remembers my mother bringing me to him as an infant. He said he will find some papers for me, but it will take time and of course money. So I gave him plenty of money and my address and I hope that I will hear from him someday.” They both laughed, relieved now that she had returned safely. “I hope so, Honey, since it’s something you’ve wanted for so long.” They stopped in London for two days on their way home and enjoyed it so much that they promised each other someday they would return for a longer stay.

When they arrived home, Mother shared the news from Germany with everyone and she showed some of the beautiful gifts she had bought, with more to arrive in the coming weeks. Then Daddy busied himself, with stained glass windows that he had committed to make. After Mother assured herself that the apartments were rented and in order, she looked into bringing Gunnar to San Francisco.

Two weeks later she told my father, “Well, it’s all arranged. Gunnar will arrive from Sweden September 19.” Daddy said, “What are you talking about? I told you that I absolutely did not want him to come here to visit. He is not coming here to visit. It will do no good for anyone. Not for him. Not for us. That’s final. He’s not coming.” I was at home for the last weeks of summer vacation before returning to Stanford early in September. Terry came to visit from Bakersfield, where he was working for the summer as an engineer in the oil fields. Mother had begun to accept him though she still warned me daily, that I must complete my studies at Stanford and graduate. My grades had improved dramatically and I was well on the road to my bachelor’s degree in Speech Therapy on time, with my class, in June 1955.

Gunnar arrived on schedule. It was immediately apparent that he was very eccentric and would have a hard time fitting into anyone’s normal way of life. He was twenty-five years old and even less attractive than he had been when they visited him in Sweden. His pimply, oily skin, and lank greasy blond hair were worse because his body was not used to our mild climate and he sweated profusely. He did not seem to bathe and within a short time Daddy told Mother, “You make that boy take a shower now. I mean it. Now!”

He moved into my bedroom. My bathroom had a stall shower with no tub. Mother showed him how the shower worked and he looked as if he understood. But nothing happened. He still smelled awful. Mother listened outside the bathroom when she heard the water running in the shower. She nodded to herself with satisfaction that he would at least smell better now. But when he exited the bathroom he still smelled. Daddy insisted to Mother that Gunnar only ran the water and did not get wet, because the towels were bone dry and Gunnar still smelled. “Lee, I told you not to bring him over. Do something about this now or I’m moving out!”

Gunnar finally admitted to my mother that he didn’t know how to bathe himself because his mother had always done that for him. Mother gave him some quick lessons in showering and after that, she stood guard outside the bathroom and timed the water running and smelled him and checked the towel to be sure it was damp and had been used. This technique seemed to work in that he smelled better – not good – but tolerably better. Daddy agreed not to move out, but he shook his head at Mother. “Don’t ever say that I agreed to this. I told you not to

bring him over. He's a *svedot!!!* A dope! A misfit! I always thought my sister Hanni was strange, but now I know she's crazy. This boy is a mess and I blame her."

Mother called me to say that Terry and I should come home to visit since Gunnar was here from Sweden. We came up to San Francisco from Stanford on a warm autumn Saturday. We were on our best behavior during the initial introductions. Gunnar smiled warmly at me, extending a limp, damp hand, and clicked his heels together as a smart salute. We decided he was understandably nervous at meeting a new relative and her friend. The three of us got in the front seat (the only seat) in Terry's coupe, with me sitting between Terry and Gunnar, since there was no back seat and three could fit in front. Gunnar draped his sweaty arm limply, but heavily, around my shoulder in the car. I shifted slightly so he would take the hint and rest his arm on the seat back, but instead he smiled at me as his arm drifted halfway down my back. I thought of shifting my position again but dared not at this point, thinking it might be interpreted as an invitation for his arm to drift even further down my back into forbidden territory.

His English was relatively good and it was easy to make conversation with him. In fact it was too easy. And he had a lot to say. He soon made it fairly clear that he was here to take his rightful place as my companion. In fact, it appeared to him that he had arrived from Europe as the rightful Huneke representative, to marry his cousin and "keep the wealth in the family." This old world custom was still alive and well in his mind. Maybe he learned it from his teacher father's history books, or maybe from his nutty mother Hanni. I was appalled. Wherever he learned it, it had to be unlearned immediately. I told Terry in panic, "*Do something!*" Terry grinned and found an opportunity to explain calmly to Gunnar that he and I were planning to be married. Gunnar seemed surprised at this information, but only for a moment. He smiled graciously at Terry and said with disdain, looking owlishly down his nose through his eyeglasses, "We'll see about that. We'll just see what happens." Terry laughed, but I stormed into the kitchen and told Mother, in a hurried whisper, what had happened. "What have you told him? This is insane. He thinks he's come over here to marry me!" Mother laughed nervously and said, "Don't be silly. You're just imagining things." But she was disappointed. She had hoped Terry and I would help her entertain Gunnar and take him on outings with us sometimes. Instead we returned to Stanford, and didn't come home more often than was absolutely necessary.

Daddy took the opportunity to work long hours to complete his backlog of windows. He kept resisting Mother's suggestions to take Gunnar to the shop with him. "Surely there is something you can give him to do that will keep him busy. Who knows? Maybe this is something that he'd be good at. At least you owe him, and yourself, the opportunity to try." Daddy continued to resist but finally agreed to take him to the shop for a few days. Gunnar was only there a few hours before he broke a completed stained glass window section. Daddy adamantly refused to bring him to the shop again. He did not want to spend any more time with Gunnar than was absolutely necessary. He told Mother privately many times, "You brought this on yourself. I told you I didn't want him to come here. No good will come from this."

She called Ernest Gade, Aunt Adele's husband. Adele was Daddy's next to youngest sister. Uncle Ernest had not been on speaking terms with Carl for many years. He still believed that Carl was involved in a secret family plot that resulted in his marriage to Adele rather than his

preferred choice, her younger sister Martha. Further, he continued to be angry that Daddy's wife ran a grocery store, bought and ran an apartment building and in addition, produced a *daughter*, who he was sure was easier to raise than a son. Now she was a student at Stanford to top it all off!

Ernest was a master typographer at the San Francisco Progress, a successful San Francisco weekly paper. He was highly regarded in his work. In those days typography was done with hundreds of small letters made of metal, like the individual keys on an old typewriter, placed on large trays where they were fitted in meticulously and by hand, to produce a single page of print. When Mother asked Ernest to take Gunnar to work, he was gruff and told her no. So she called on Aunt Adele to convince Ernest, to bring Gunnar to the print shop. "Adele, this is your sister's son. I think he deserves a chance. Hanni didn't do the best job in raising him but I think it's up to us to help him." Adele sounded dubious but Mother must have done her job because Ernest finally grudgingly agreed. That first day at the print shop, Gunnar dropped a whole tray of completed typeset. It took hours to pick up and reset. Ernest growled to Mother, "No more. Not even one day. No!"

Gunnar had never had a dog. In fact no animals were allowed in his home in Sweden, so Mother and Daddy's Pekinese was a novelty to him. He extended his hand in friendship, intending to establish a cordial relationship, even though he felt far superior to a lowly dog. Honey Boy was way too nice a dog to ever bite anyone, but he clearly decided that he was not inferior to this interloper. He stayed as far away as possible from Gunnar. He refused to take treats from his hand. If Mother asked Gunnar to deliver Honey Boy's food bowl to him in the basement, Honey Boy refused to eat it, and waited until Mother or Daddy brought something. Daddy laughed to himself as he patted the dog, telling Mother privately that even the dog knew a *svedotl* when he met one.

Daddy liked to sit in his favorite chair in the evening when they watched television and Honey Boy liked to sit near him. Gunnar decided that was his favorite chair too. He loved television and that was one occupation that kept him out of Mother's way for a few hours, sometimes many hours. He became attached to soap operas in the afternoon and he watched TV all evening too. Unfortunately he had a bad habit of shuffling his feet on the carpet in front of the chair, as he sat hugging himself and rocking delightedly at the antics on the screen. Honey Boy sometimes voiced his displeasure with a low growl, but would never do anything worse than that. Gunnar was only there for six months, but long before he left, it was clear that the carpet would have to be replaced in front of the chair. He was wearing a hole in it.

Having Gunnar with her all day exhausted Mother. Many evenings she sent Daddy, Honey Boy and Gunnar around the corner to Ev and Rudy's house for dinner at 416 Gellert Drive. Judy was around eleven, Gus seven and Brad three at the time. Judy decided Gunnar was strange and no amount of etiquette training at her school, the Convent of the Sacred Heart on Broadway, caused her to extend more than minimum courtesy to him. She lifted her head, turned her nose in the air and herded her little brothers away, acting as if Gunnar were poison. Rudy laughed, he always "had a meeting" he had to run to. That left Evelyn, Daddy and Honey Boy to deal with Gunnar. He was a picky eater, so Ev had trouble cooking things that

he liked, though she tried. She discovered he liked pasta, so it became the preferred meal of the day.

Mother and Daddy took Gunnar on trips throughout California, but it was not with the same enthusiasm that they usually had for visitors. Desperate, Mother turned to Rudy for help. "Rudy I need you to help me with Gunnar." Rudy wanted no part of Gunnar. "Mother, I just can't do it. There's no one I can ask, and I can't have him in my office either." But my mother continued. "Rudy, I think he needs a girl. You know Ma used to say there's no pot so crooked that you can't find a lid to fit. Can't you find a girl for him? He really enjoys those sexy scenes on the soap operas he watches in the afternoons. I think he's got normal instincts, he's just never had an opportunity. I think if he had some experience everything would change." Rudy rolled his eyes skyward, "I'll see what I can do."

A few days later Rudy took Gunnar "out on the town with the guys." Rudy, Larry Prini and Bob Lane, a seaman friend of Rudy's, took Gunnar to see Tempest Storm, a stripper in an Oakland nightclub. Gunnar loved it. He sat there delightedly crowing as he shuffled his feet faster and faster. In fact, he liked it so much that he learned how to get there on a bus and see her show alone on many other occasions. Mother said that still didn't help enough. "Rudy, I think if you got him with a real girl that might help." Rudy shook his head but finally agreed to get a call girl to come to the house when Ev and the kids were gone. He and Larry Prini were there with Gunnar when the girl arrived but Rudy said nothing happened. "Mother, the girl was pretty, willing and experienced but all Gunnar was interested in was looking and touching, though he seemed to enjoy that a lot."

Mother gave up after that. Thank God, his six months visa was coming to an end. "Gunnar, it's almost time for you to go home." "Ja, but I have still not seen America." "What do you mean?" "I came here to see all of it and I have only seen San Francisco and California. I want to see all of America. I have been told that you can make a very interesting trip and see all of America on the Greyhound bus. I want to do that." Mother was amazed. She told Daddy, "He wants to travel to New York by Greyhound bus. What do we do? What if he gets lost somewhere between here and New York and we're responsible for him forever as he wanders around America?" Against their better judgment they bought him a Greyhound bus ticket from San Francisco to New York where he would get on a plane and return to Stockholm, Sweden. There his parents would pick him up at the airport and take him home to Göteborg.

The deed was done. He left on March 24, 1954. Mother and Daddy waited nervously until they spoke to Gunnar and his parents by phone. He arrived home safely. He told them the Greyhound bus trip across America was the best thing he had done here. He loved it. After Mother and Daddy hung up they hugged each other and sighed with relief. Their house was their own again. Mother had all the carpets cleaned and the hole patched in the carpet in front of Daddy's favorite chair. Honey Boy sat in his preferred place next to Daddy again. Mother had energy to cook dinner again. Ev didn't have to cook dinner for Gunnar any more.

But Gunnar brought something to the family that was priceless and lasting. First, everyone now knew what a *svedotl* was. And second, everyone who ever met him had his own hilarious anecdotes about Gunnar Swenson, our Huneke cousin from Sweden. We learned much later

that he worked as a clerical civil servant in Göteborg for the minimum number of years required for retirement with a full pension at age fifty-five. In Socialist Sweden this retirement pension included twice a week maid service if he could prove himself incapable of cleaning his own apartment, which he had no trouble doing. We often wondered if someone had to bathe him too.

Over the years as he aged, he visited his Huneke cousins in Hamburg on a somewhat regular basis, particularly if my cousin Warren Gade was making his annual visit. Gunnar changed little over the years, he never married, and was always eccentric. When Terry and I and Connie visited Hamburg with Warren and his wife and son Robert, the summer of 1979, Gunnar came down to Hamburg to see us all. He had changed little, though he was now in his late forties. He eyed sixteen year old Connie appreciatively, as if he thought this was finally the arranged marriage, he, the still eligible bachelor, was waiting for. Connie had heard all the Gunnar stories and kept her distance. She kept one of us between her and Gunnar at all times. We learned that his father Gustav Swenson had died earlier that year on January 6, 1979 and his mother Hanni was in a home for the aged. She died almost five years later December 20, 1983. We learned after the fact that Gunnar died sometime in 2000, still alone, though rumor had it that his elderly housekeeper, paid for by his government pension, was deeply attached to him and mourned his death.

In June 1954, Terry graduated from Stanford and went into the Navy. That summer, I stayed home and worked in the Teamsters Security Health Fund office, rather than Daddy's studio. I noticed how depressed Mother got in the constant summer fog in Lake Merced Park where their home was located. I returned to Stanford for my last year, Terry was assigned to Treasure Island for a six-week school with the Navy. The Navy had no housing, so he stayed with my parents. Although he was seldom there, they got to know each other better. Soon after, Terry and I told my parents that we would be married after I graduated and Terry's ship returned from the Orient. "Why don't you wait until he's out of the Navy?" Mother asked hopefully. "You could stay here, at home, and work and save money." Daddy folded his arms across his chest, rocked on his heels and smiled. We said quietly that the wedding date would be Sunday, September 11, 1955. Terry had given me a diamond engagement ring.

In June 1955, I finished my studies at Stanford and graduated in Frost Amphitheatre. Mother was quiet as she watched me. This was the day she had wished for. I was a graduate of Stanford University and would be able to say that for the rest of my life. Mother wondered what it felt like. Only four tickets were available for each student, so Mother, Daddy, Rudy and Evelyn attended my graduation. Afterward, we all went out to dinner. The event that Mother had longed for now passed very quietly. Rudy and Evelyn had a serious argument earlier that day so they weren't speaking to each other which made for strained conversation. Mother and Daddy gave me a beautiful white gold bracelet watch from Shreve's. My mother told me shyly, "And I got an even better present for myself. I finally have my own birth certificate. It arrived from Vienna just a few days ago." Daddy smiled and nodded as she told how she got the papers she had wanted for so long.

During the summer I did clinical practice in speech therapy at San Francisco State College, just a mile from the house. Sometimes I drove my sporty yellow Mercury, with a black top,

down to my father's studio to help with his jobs. I always did his typing for him when I was home

The three of us worked on wedding plans all summer. The ceremony would be in Saint Ann Chapel in Palo Alto, which was the Newman Center for Stanford students. Terry and I had gone to church together there for four years. Father John Tierney was the charming priest Terry and I knew so well. The reception afterward would be held in the garden of the Kathleen Norris home next to the chapel. My parents were especially interested in the wedding reception after the ceremony. They thought the location was wonderful.

Father Tierney suggested that the three of us meet with Continental Caterers in Menlo Park. Mother smiled as Daddy expressed definite opinions about the food and drink for the reception. "I want lots of food. Good food. Real food. Not those little crackers with a dab of some junk on it. I'm happy to pay for champagne, if that's what you want, but I want plenty of good German beer." I agreed, though I doubted that anyone would drink beer. "I'm happy for you to have a white wedding cake, but I also want good cakes and some platters of fruit."

Mother and I had picked out my wedding dress at the City of Paris. She kept her weight down to 200 pounds and bought a beautiful navy blue lace dress with matching small fitted hat for herself for the wedding. She wanted to look her best. We sent the invitations and gifts started arriving. My parents were there as I opened each gift and Daddy enjoyed all of Mother's comments. Terry and I had selected china, silver, crystal and other items. My parents wanted to see everything.

Mother was thrilled to be invited to a shower at the Suhr's house at 2395 Vallejo Street in Pacific Heights. Patricia Suhr had been a friend of mine at Dominican. Pat, Joan Blaine and Pat Harrison, were my three bridesmaids. It was a kitchen shower and Mother couldn't wait to go to the City of Paris kitchen department and buy them out. Two huge boxes of every imaginable kitchen pot and bowl and utensil arrived at the Suhr house before the shower. Mother didn't understand the concept of everyone giving one little piece or another for my kitchen. She wanted to make sure I had everything I could possibly need. So she just bought it all.

I was overwhelmed, then embarrassed, as I opened the huge boxes and began to remove the endless kitchen bounty from Mother in front of all my friends. But I understood Mother's joy at being able to provide the best and the most of everything for me. She was making up for all the things she had wanted for herself. I thought to myself, the Hell with being embarrassed in front of my friends and Mrs. Suhr. I opened every last package and hugged my mother, thanking her for everything. The wonderful kitchen supplies traveled around with Terry and me through the many moves in the first few years of our marriage. More than fifty years later I still smile when I use the wonderful things she bought for me at that kitchen shower at the Suhr home in San Francisco.

It was popular to share favorite recipes with brides in the fifties so Evelyn put together a collection of favorite recipes for me. Mother just told me to call whenever I was going to cook and she would tell me how to make it. But just in case, I started a binder that summer and

wrote down the recipes for all the wonderful food that she cooked. Mother said most of her favorite foods didn't have set recipes. You just took a handful of this or a pinch of that. But the most important thing was to find a good butcher, once you got settled, wherever you lived. And that's exactly what I did. I always found a good butcher and then called from San Diego, Vallejo, and Richland, Washington and finally Menlo Park, asking for cooking advice, as my mother talked me through the recipe. More than once I called from Richland saying "Mother, I'm having company for dinner and you need to tell me how to cook the pot roast, or the rouladin, or the dumplings."

The wedding plans moved forward relentlessly; my last days at home passed too quickly. Guests, friends, rehearsals, and endless details whirled around all of us. Terry's ship arrived in San Diego from Japan three days before the wedding and I flew down to get a marriage license with him. We flew back together on Friday night. My parents hosted the Rehearsal Dinner the night before the wedding, since it was difficult for Terry's parents to arrange from Tulare. Terry stayed with my parents and me at the house on Eucalyptus Drive and he drove me and my wedding dress down to Palo Alto the morning of the wedding. My father got through it all in a daze and Mother stayed calm.

On Sunday, September 11, 1955 everything went according to plan. The reception afterward was everything my parents hoped for. The food was good – and plentiful. The weather was warm. Two hundred guests sipped the champagne politely, but they *loved* the beer. Daddy grinned at me as he toasted me with a glass of beer. He slipped Terry an envelope with \$1,000 in it to be sure we didn't run out of money. And then it was over. We were gone. Little Judy and Gus had been in the wedding and they were still nearby to visit. Terry and I would live in San Diego, while his ship was stationed there.

Before driving south to San Diego, two days later we came back to say goodbye and to thank my parents for the wonderful wedding. Mother was tearful as she hugged me goodbye. Everything was the way she had wished all these years. And now I was leaving with my husband. I had a degree from Stanford, one of the finest universities. Married to a nice man and not pregnant!! It was what my mother had dreamed of for years. Daddy put his arm around her as they stood in the window and waved, until the yellow and black Mercury coupe turned the corner. "Well, that's that", he said as he hugged my mother, and brushed away his tears.

Mother kept in touch with me to be sure I was all right. Terry's ship left for a week on maneuvers, as soon as we arrived and we had only a few hours together to move into the furnished apartment Terry had rented for us. He had only one day to search before the wedding, so he did the best he could. Within a few days I started looking for a better place to live and mother and I figured out by phone, how to furnish it without spending a lot of money.

By the time Terry returned the next weekend, I showed him a new apartment in a quiet neighborhood near the beach and we decided to rent it. Best of all – it was unfurnished! We could buy a new king sized bed with part of the wedding gift money from my father, and Mother would send down their couch and coffee table from the den, and Ev and Rudy's kitchen table and chairs from Marina Court Apartments, as well as my old bedroom set from home. Terry's

parents got us our first new television. We bought lamps and I bought a used sewing machine so I could sew curtains for all the windows. We bought grass fiber matting that could be sewed together with twine to make wall to wall carpeting for our new apartment. Terry enrolled in a carpentry class at night at the local high school so he could use their tools to make end tables and a coffee table for the living room. Until they were finished, we used TV trays for end tables and my parents old coffee table.

By the time my parents drove to San Diego at Thanksgiving, two months later, we looked well settled. They brought with them a load of wedding gifts and other things that we needed. As a junior officer, Terry had the duty on Thanksgiving Day, so we all took a little boat out to the U.S.S. Shields, anchored in San Diego Bay, for Thanksgiving dinner. Mother had trouble hoisting herself on and off the dock from the little Captain's gig, but nothing was going to stop her from this event. It was different from anything they had done before and they loved it.

The next day, Terry was off duty, so we drove across the border to Tijuana, Mexico for the day. We did all the things that tourists do and then crossed the border back into the United States uneventfully. That night Terry barbecued T-bone steaks, basted in beer, on our new barbecue. We had no backyard, or even a patio, so we set it up on the sidewalk outside our apartment. Mother couldn't wait to see me in a real home, but at least now I had many of my own things around me. I had started a job as a social worker at the San Diego Welfare Department in November. Mother kept trying to persuade me to come home once the ship left for Japan, but I shook my head no. "I've never lived alone Mother. I want to stay here in my own apartment." My mother understood and said no more. She was happy I was independent. Only a few months later Mother and Daddy received the joyous news that we were expecting a baby late in October, after Terry's ship returned from Japan.

My parents began corresponding with Horst Huneke, Daddy's nephew, about coming to San Francisco. When they were in Germany, Horst expressed interest in coming to America to work with my father. They arranged for a flight with Scandinavian Air and Horst arrived at San Francisco at two in the morning on July 21, 1956. He was nearly six feet tall, weighed 130 pounds and had blue eyes and sandy brown hair. They put him to bed for a couple of hours then woke him to drive with them to Joan Blaine's wedding in Tulare, five hours south. Horst wore a heavy wool suit and sweated profusely in the heat of the valley. I drove up from San Diego and met my cousin for the first time. Terry was still overseas. After the wedding and reception, we all spent the night in Fresno, because there were no suitable motels in Tulare. I was six months pregnant and everyone shared the joyful anticipation of a new baby due in October.

My parents left Fresno the next day to take Horst to the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, where they enjoyed the splendor of the valley as well as the beautiful Hotel. Horst stood on the terrace with them that night and thought he had never seen anything so inspiring as the Firefall. Mother drove the car up Tioga Road and stopped at Parsons Lodge at Soda Springs. They sipped the cold soda water bubbling from the ground. Daddy told Horst how he had always loved this beautiful place. He said, "Maybe someday we will hike these trails together." Horst agreed with everything my father said. So far, everything was even better than he had dreamed.



On the way home they stopped in Oakdale to look at the eleven windows and two rose windows, which Daddy had installed after 1953. He wanted Horst to see the kind of work that he would be doing and to be proud of the end result. Back in San Francisco that evening, my father said, "Mein junge (my boy) – tomorrow we will go to work." He told Horst he would be paid \$5.00 an hour. Minimum wage was 65 cents an hour at that time and Horst was very happy. He thought his uncle was being very fair with him. Each morning he got up, ate the breakfast that my mother fixed for him and went to the studio with my father. Each evening he studied for his driver's license examination. He talked with them both in German, but he insisted on speaking English each day. His English improved daily, as well as his skills in making stained glass. He had a social security number now. Daddy taught Horst how to cut the patterns on the colored glass and lead the pieces together with solder. He was eager to have the boy begin to draw so that he could design windows. That was the heart of the business. Without artistic skills, Horst would never be more than a skilled glazer.

Each evening Horst talked with my parents, but soon he found himself confiding his inner dreams only to my mother. But not all of them. There was one nagging dream that he had not told her yet and he was waiting for the right moment. Horst dreaded the moment. He always knew that he had no artistic talent, but more important, he did not *want* to work in the stained glass studio. What he *wanted* was to come to America! *That* was his dream! And he had accomplished that! But how to tell my father? After three weeks of working with Daddy every day, and saying nothing, he decided to tell my mother. "I can't do this. I can't paint and I can't draw. I'm good with my head and my hands, but I'm not good as an artist. I can't do this. I don't want to do it." Mother looked at him, speechless. She said firmly, "Don't tell that to Carl." "I can't be a phony and pretend that I want to do this. I'm not going to do this," argued Horst.

Mother was angry. Here was another person who had just used them to get what he wanted! She thought Daddy's family would be different from hers. She didn't care for herself so much, but she knew how disappointed Daddy would be. He had confided his joy to her when they were alone at night. He had not given a lot of thought to the idea of his studio surviving after he was gone, but now it appealed to him. It took Mother a number of days to find the right words and the right time to tell Daddy. They all sat in the living room watching Lawrence Welk on black and white TV. Then Horst looked sideways at my mother and purposefully left the room. "Honey, I have to tell you something. Horst does not want to work at the studio. He feels he has no artistic skills and he doesn't want to go there any more." Daddy looked at Mother, with disbelief, as if he had not heard correctly. She repeated her explanation. He shook his head. "No, that can't be true. He's doing fine. This is all just new for him. He hasn't said anything to me." Mother insisted that Daddy face the truth. Once he understood, he exploded in anger, left the house with his station wagon and did not return for several hours.

Mother was relieved when he returned, humming and nodding his head happily. "I know how to fix all of this. His only problem is that he's never learned art. There is a wonderful school in Paris and we'll send him there to art school. He will learn and when he returns, we'll continue with the training at Century Stained Glass Studio." Horst stubbornly stood his ground and stared at them both. "No, I'm not going back over there. I came from there to here and I'm not going back."

Now my parents were both furious with him. There were a couple of days of angry talk and then there was silence. Eventually they got used to the idea and Daddy continued his work, knowing that Horst would not join him. They talked alone and decided that it was best after all, not to have Horst work with my father. "Honey, we just have to accept the idea that we were used. All he wanted was to come to America. Not to work with you. And he's a stubborn boy. You can see that. There's no use to try to talk any sense into him. He has his mind made up and he's not going to change it." And as his life played out in America, that stubborn streak proved to be the one overriding factor that shaped his path in the years ahead.

Mother found Horst a job as the Parts Manager at Pardee Motors, a Volkswagon dealership in Palo Alto. He took the bus and the train to work every morning and returned in the evening. It cost forty cents round trip each day. He wasn't paid \$5.00 an hour any more, but he didn't have to do the hated art work either. He saved his money and Mother showed him how to get a loan so he could buy his own Volkswagon.

After Christmas, Horst joined the Air Force for four years, because he didn't want to be drafted into the Army. He left soon after the first of the year for basic training. He telephoned collect to my parents at Lombard 4-2951, as often as he could. Mother would tell him what was going on with all the family and the friends he had come to know. Then Daddy would get on the phone. "You only have three years, nine months left, mein junge. You can do it. You can do it." And Horst would say miserably, "I want to run away from here. I want to come home." And Daddy would answer firmly, "No, you don't do that. You decided to go into the Air Force and you stay and finish it." But Daddy smiled to himself, with some satisfaction that the boy was struggling with the harsh realities of life. Aside from short visits they would not see him again for several years.

He got used to the Air Force. In fact, he adapted so well that he signed on for an extra year when he was stationed in Pennsylvania at the end of his service. Of course that could have been because he met Vonnie Hugo, who lived with her parents in rural Pennsylvania on a spread of land. She was an unmarried woman with a child, a little three year old girl named Wendi. Mr. Hugo was lord of the land he owned and his stubborn streak rivaled Horst's – it was a match made in Hell. Mother seldom heard from Horst but when she did she told my father, "I think he has a female. He denies it but I can just tell from the way he's talking. He sounds cocky and fresh. I think he has a female back there and that's why he signed on for another year." Daddy told her it was her imagination. "Forget about it – he'll be home soon. As soon as his time is up, he'll come back to San Francisco. He'll find himself a nice German girl and get married and that will be that." Mother thought to herself that Horst might stay in Pennsylvania with "the female" she sensed he had found. It was possible that they might not see him again. As it turned out her intuition was right about the female – he had indeed found someone. But she was wrong about the rest. They would certainly see him again, and there would be much more to the story of Horst in America.

My parents received sad news from Germany. Johanna, my grandmother, had died peacefully in her sleep. She was ninety-one and had lived a full life. They were grateful for their visit a few years earlier, when they had enjoyed being with her. They were happy she had lived.

comfortably during the last years of her life, in the new house that had been built behind her original house, now rented out. And they were grateful to Martha for being the daughter who stayed with her mother throughout her life. Uncle Mös and his wife were dead now too. All of the old ones were gone and Mother and Daddy were now the "older generation" Mother was happy Johanna had told her the stories of Daddy's youth and of her own hardships as a young widow with nine children to rear and only a small pension. Mother made sure she shared those stories with me because they should never be forgotten and I have written them in my father's biography

One day, my parents received a call from a young man named Franz Amandi. He had met Horst in the Air Force and now he was stationed in Sacramento, California. Mother and Daddy invited Franz to the house. He was a very nice young man from Wiesbaden, Germany. He had a great interest in art and enjoyed talking with my father about stained glass, the new faceted glass and even his oil paintings. Daddy confided to Franz that he wanted to paint again, but this time he wanted to try acrylics instead of oils. Franz was interested in all of these ideas. Mother loved hearing the two of them talk about art. She told Franz, "Sometimes I call him my Männlemaler – my painter of little men." Then she'd tease, "I think he looks a little bit like Honey Boy, don't you?" Daddy shook his head in mock disgust. Then they laughed together. Daddy took Franz to the Studio where they became engrossed in discussing techniques of leaded glass, as well as the new faceted glass. Eventually Daddy even tendered an offer to Franz to join him in the stained glass business. Franz was touched and told him he would like to think about it. My parent's friendship with Franz would last a lifetime.

While Franz was stationed at McClellan Air Force Base near Sacramento, he flew as a navigator on AWACS Constellation reconnaissance planes. Air Force rules only allowed him twenty hours of air time per week, which left a lot of time off. He decided to get a job in banking to fill those spare hours and soon landed a job with the Bank of America branch closest to McClellan. During the 1960 Olympics the bank assigned Franz to the branch they opened in Squaw Valley for the Games. He had a great time meeting the athletes and watching the events.

When he was discharged from the Air Force he continued working for Bank of America in San Francisco. He told my father he had decided not to join him in the stained glass business since banking seemed to offer opportunities not only in America, but also in Germany should he decide to return there. Eventually he left the Bank of America to join Crocker Bank for a better job. He was a talented and hard working young man and quickly worked his way up the ladder in banking. He enjoyed seeing my parents often and now earned enough money to ask if there might be an apartment available at Marina Court Apartments. Soon he had a lovely studio apartment and started buying furniture, one careful piece at a time. He had good taste and preferred to buy less, but excellent quality.

As a single, attractive, up and coming young banker, he had access to some of San Francisco's finest families. He mingled with the rich with ease since he had excellent manners and an upbeat, urbane demeanor. He attended a party at a Pacific Heights mansion and met Anita, a beautiful young woman who worked in the household as an au pair, for the children of

the family Her long black hair belied her Swedish parentage, though her clear white skin and dark blue eyes, deep set above high cheekbones, gave evidence of her Scandinavian heritage. Franz's eyes sparkled when he looked at her eyes and then at her lovely figure and she returned his gaze demurely Clearly there was chemistry

The time was right for both of them. Each was young, attractive, away from the taboos of home and San Francisco surrounded them with beauty everywhere they went. They walked through North Beach, climbing the steps to Coit Tower, where they embraced and kissed for the first time, as they looked out at the lights winking at them around San Francisco Bay They explored the secret corners of Golden Gate Park that were designed just for lovers. They sat close to each other on a bench in the summer fog, as they listened to Sunday concerts in front of the band shell. Afterward they strolled across the path to the Tea Garden where they sipped jasmine tea in the little open tea house, perched above the koi pond and he watched her nibble daintily at the little cookies with fortunes inside. Why was he not surprised when the little paper inside his cookie said "You will be happy forever with your new love"?

He took her to his parish church, Saint Vincent de Paul, at the corner of Steiner and Green Streets in Pacific Heights. The stained glass windows inside were as beautiful as anything he had seen in Europe and rivaled even the magnificent masterpieces in the Chartres Cathedral in France. They were particularly dear to him because they were designed and created by his good friend Carl Huneke. Franz had grown up in Germany, a Catholic, deeply influenced by his devoutly religious mother He never missed Mass and regularly received Holy Communion The Sacrament of Penance relieved his soul when he confessed his sins to the priest and received absolution Now he wanted his beautiful Anita to join him in his love of God and the Catholic Church. He wanted her to convert to Catholicism, the religion he loved so well. She looked at him with her luminous blue eyes, amazed, and said, "But Franz, I could never convert to Catholicism. I grew up a Lutheran. I am not very religious, nor was my family, but I could never become a Catholic. It would go against everything I believe."

He was deeply disappointed and always harbored the hope that someday she would change her mind But he decided that one could not expect to find such a love twice in a lifetime and he would speak to the priest about marrying Anita in the Church Unless this was somehow possible, he could not overlook the requirements of the church he loved so well. The priest was understanding but told Franz they could not be married in the church unless Anita agreed to convert. Since she would not agree, they must find another way Finally it was arranged that the couple would marry in the church hall, in the basement, directly underneath the main altar of Saint Vincent de Paul Church Franz found a Jesuit priest who was willing to perform the marriage. After all, Anita was an unmarried Christian, though not Catholic, and Franz was an unmarried Catholic man. The ceremony was simple, but lovely and Franz looked upward to the altar in the Church above and prayed to God to bless his marriage, even though the lovely bride was a Lutheran, not a Catholic. They were surrounded by the circle of friends they made since coming to San Francisco and though none of their families from Sweden or Germany were there, they felt blessed in the aura of love that surrounded them

They went on a short honeymoon to Carmel and Monterey and returned to their new one bedroom apartment at Marina Court Apartments. Anita enrolled in some classes to improve

her English and some other studies to keep up with her urbane husband Franz continued his rapid climb at Crocker Bank and soon found himself in demand in higher banking circles. In the course of doing business for Crocker Bank, he met an interesting man named Don Silverthorn. Don had organized a new bank which catered to high income customers in San Francisco. Don was flamboyant and moved easily in San Francisco's upper circles. He was married and he and his wife were always a popular addition to any social event. His new bank was called San Francisco National Bank.

He liked Franz and was particularly charmed when he met the beautiful Anita. The young couple was included in some social events with the Silverthorns. Anita was as thrilled as Franz, when he was offered a job at the Bank with the title "Assistant Cashier", which meant he would be an officer of the Bank. The responsibility was heavy but Franz felt that this genial man who was his boss would lead San Francisco National Bank to great heights. And Franz was going to be right there with him!

He and Anita were excited to be part of this great adventure, especially since she was now pregnant. By the end of 1964 their little family would be three! Though they loved their beautiful large apartment at Marina Court Apartments, someday they would need to buy a home. They looked forward to Franz's success with the Bank and with his boss, whom he admired.

As Franz became familiar with his job, he began to look into the inner workings of the Bank. Don was frequently away – entertaining, developing new business, or just having fun. He loved to gamble – it helped him relax. Nothing felt quite as good as a big stake with a winning hand in Baccarat.

Often Don's business friends in San Francisco asked for loans and it was Franz's responsibility to review the transactions. As he studied the transactions, he was appalled at what was happening. Don's banking practices were highly unusual and Franz began to suspect, downright illegal. Friends got loans with very low rates, inadequate collateral and liberal payback options. As he dug further it got worse. Don was using Bank funds to stake his gambling habits.

By now their son Christopher was born, but Franz was distracted by what he discovered at the Bank. He finally confided in Anita who thought he was over-reacting. "The Silverthorn's are lovely people. They've given us beautiful gifts for Christopher. They are kind to us and include us in their social events. I'm sure you must be mistaken." Finally Franz had to confide in someone. He visited with my parents at our house in Menlo Park on a Sunday afternoon. My brother Rudy, who was now a Labor Union official, was there too. Franz told them that Don Silverthorn was engaged in highly unusual bank transactions and he was worried about his liability with the bank, especially as an officer. He knew that the bank examiners, who would surely be there eventually, would uncover these unusual practices. But Rudy said, "Oh no! Not Don Silverthorn. He's a good friend of mine. You must be mistaken. Don's one of the most popular bankers in San Francisco."

Two weeks later Franz told my parents that he couldn't take the stress any more. He and Anita and the baby were moving back to Germany. He had quit his job at the Bank, gave notice to vacate his apartment and packed their belongings for shipping. He was convinced that if he stayed at the bank, or in San Francisco for that matter, he would be held responsible for the activities at the bank. He might even face charges. We all said our sad farewells as the little family left for Germany, but understood his concern.

Within a few months the bank examiners discovered malfeasance at San Francisco National Bank. Don Silverthorn was indicted along with several of the Bank officers. After a long scandalous trial some were convicted and sentenced to prison terms. Mother kept Franz informed from time to time on the telephone and they were always grateful that he left when he did.

In Germany Franz quickly got a job with a large bank in Frankfurt, since he had impeccable credentials. He worked his way up the ladder again, because a second child was on the way. By the time Robert arrived, Franz was again an officer of a large bank, but this time the inner political workings of the bank were unsavory. Requirements were made of him that he did not think were appropriate, but he tried to calm his fears. He continued working at the bank because it provided a good salary and now Anita told him a third child was expected. He began to think that the only way to have a straight and honest business was to be in your own business. Then you could make sure everything was done correctly.

He remembered that his uncle had always told him that someday his religious art publishing business would belong to Franz, so he went to see his uncle. "Ya, my boy! You come too late! I sold the business. I had a good offer and I sold it. I thought you were happy being a banker, Franz! I have a small antique shop now. Nothing much, but I make a small profit and it keeps me entertained."

By the time their daughter Desiree arrived, Franz's uncle had died and left him a small collection of antiques. With that start, he decided to start his own antique business in Wiesbaden. He had always loved the arts and this was the opportunity to do something he loved, even if it would be a risk. He opened a small shop in a fashionable district. With his good eye for quality, he soon gathered valuable antiques and established a reputation as a dealer who could find quality pieces for discerning buyers. His business flourished, though he had little time for his wife and children, especially when he also had to spend time with his aging mother, who demanded his attention. When Anita, at home with three little children, cried for attention, or for some small luxuries, he was impatient with her, saying, "Nonsense, you know we have to save money now. I need to invest everything we have in buying more inventory. That's the only way we'll get ahead!" She would lash out at him, "Oh I hate you. You're so *German!*" They were going through the difficult "sandwich years." They had aging and needy parents on one side; little children on the other. It is a time when you need to comfort each other in the few spare moments you might find.

Instead Franz found comfort in running his business, being a dutiful and attentive son to his mother, and attending church. There he always found the peace, beauty and solace that he did not find at home. Anita found comfort too. She took the children to the park each day.

because they lived in a small flat up many stairs, and the children needed space to play. She met other mothers and nannies in the park with their children, but she also met a handsome young man who took an interest in her. He whispered in her ear the things she longed to hear. Though he was poor and had no money to spend on her, she soon succumbed to his attentions and enjoyed the passion within her that she thought was dead. She felt alive again! Her skin glowed – her eyes sparkled! She was in love! People turned to look at her as she passed because she was radiant. Finally even Franz noticed. He decided to follow her one day to see what had turned her on. They were easy to discover because they weren't even trying to hide.

Franz was unforgiving and filed for divorce and the battle began. They haggled over every antique, each of them wanting – no, needing – to extract every last penny from the other. Franz had hoped that Anita's lover was at least rich – but no such luck! She didn't even have the brains to have an affair with a rich man. He was a poor young guy who took off when he found out that he might have to support her. The courts gave custody of the three children to Anita, but Franz had to pay support. Anita got alimony for a few years but then she had to become self supporting.

Franz concentrated on collecting antiques for his business. Frequently he drove to Paris to a favored dealer in a back alley and returned across the border to Germany, with valuable paintings stashed under inexpensive things in the trunk of his car. Eventually he gathered a valuable collection. But Anita spied on him. She went to his shop when he wasn't there, convinced that he had far more assets than he claimed. She took him to court to get more money for her and the children.

Sometimes he carried expensive paintings in the trunk of his car, because he didn't want her to know what he had. That was the only place he felt was completely safe – until one day when he thought he saw Anita sneaking around. Later he found a bullet hole near the lock, in the trunk of his car. He could never prove anything, but he always had his suspicions. Eventually he opened a bigger, even more stylish store, in the fashionable Rhine District. He had considerable success but the tragedy of divorce is that nobody wins – not the husband and wife – and certainly not the children. And this family was no different from any other. Rising taxes and lease constraints finally caused him to close his business.

Our warm friendship with Franz continues. He escorted Tim and Greg around Germany when they were 14 and 15 years old. He and Warren Gade, my cousin, became close friends and enjoyed each other's company for years. Terry and I, along with Connie, visited him in Wiesbaden where he lived with his second wife Martina, a teacher, ten years younger, whom he married after his children were grown. Franz visited San Francisco often, both alone and with Martina. He kept up his friendship with Horst, his old Air Force buddy from so many years ago. Of all my German relatives, Franz was the best – and he's not even a relative – which says something about my German genes! He is a genial, entertaining man who is always fun to be with. My parents loved him and would have embraced him as if he were a son, had he accepted my father's offer to join him in the stained glass business so many years ago.



Above and Below: Carl and Lee visit Carl's nieces Kathe Brandt and Annaliese Linne and nephew Heinrich Henke.

Above from left: Kathe, Lee, August Brandt, Annaliese Linne Back: Carl and Willy Linne

Right: Johanna Huneke near the end of her life.

Below: From Left: Heinrich Henke, Lee, August Brandt, Kathe and at back Carl and Annaliese





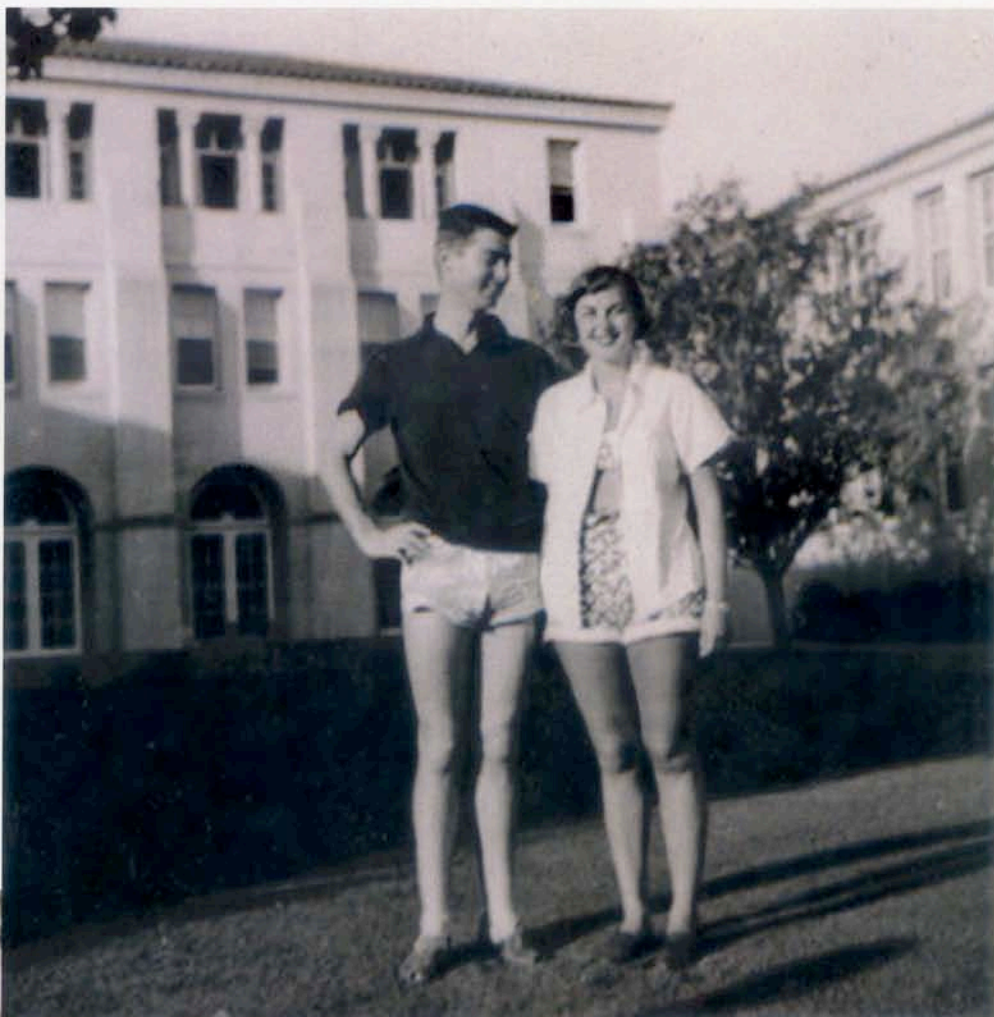


Above: Rudy, Ev, Mother, Daddy, Marge, Terry, Larry Prini, Della, Rudy's secretary.

Below: Mother, Ev, Daddy, Rudy and Marge



Right: Marge and Terry in front of Branner Hall at Stanford.



Left: Marge and Terry in Golden Gate Park.



Upper Left: Richard and Kitty Bachman, Gunnar, Daddy, probably in Palm Springs.

Below Right: Mother and Gunnar with Kitty in background.

Below: Franz Amandi in Germany with his first wife Anita and their three children, Robert, Christopher and Desiree





Upper Left: Marge and Mother



Upper Right: Best Man Don Malarkey and Mother with Father Tierney.

Right: Margaret Blaine, Marge and Mother



Below: Mother, Margaret, Marge and Terry, Joan Blaine, Patricia Harrison, Patricia Suhr and Judy Tham.





Upper: Wedding party  
Right: Lee with guests.  
Below: Gus, Judy, Marge, Joan, Pat  
Harrison and Pat Suhr





Upper: Terry, Marge, Daddy and Mother in Tijuana.

Lower Left: Marge, Tim and Mother in front of our first rented house in Richland.

Lower Right: Marge pregnant with Greg in Richland.



# MA, MOTHER AND ME

## A MEMOIR

### Chapter 10 People

#### ***People who need people Are the luckiest people In the world.***

After Mother left the grocery store she threw herself into the task of improving Marina Court Apartments. When she ran out of money to work on the building she was bored and battled periods of depression. During these low periods she indulged herself with telephone calls to friends and acquaintances, a pastime that kept her connected to everyone she knew

#### Lester and Lillian Price

During the years we had lived at 1319 Page Street she befriended many people in the neighborhood. They always stopped in the store to visit. She enjoyed those contacts since she had very little time to talk to people other than that. Lillian and Lester Price lived in the flat downstairs at 1317 Page Street, so they were our closest neighbors. They owned the Haight Ashbury Florist on Haight Street across from the Pork Store and down a block. Lillian and Les worked together and the business suited them. They each dressed natively every morning, he in a blue suit and tie, she in a nice dress, appropriate attire for their elegant florist shop.

Often I would stop by their shop on the way to and from school. I loved to walk among the artfully arranged vases of cut flowers all around the tile floor. Les was gruff and shooed me off but Lillian was always nice to me. Sometimes she'd say "I'm so busy right now, we've got a big funeral." I would watch her deftly arrange the elaborate displays to be delivered to a funeral, most often for a Mason or an Eastern Star.

They were tall, slim and dark haired, well coifed, good looking people. Lillian confided to Lee, "You know the florist business requires that we both be active in San Francisco social life. So much of our business comes from contacts with socially active, wealthy people." Les was a member of the Masons and Lillian joined Eastern Star, the women's version of the Masons. She was "working her way up the Chairs" to become a Grand Matron of the Eastern Star and often confided to Lee the endless petty bickering of her women friends who competed with each other. Many of their club functions were formal; the women were required to wear appropriate attire, and be escorted by men in tuxedos or white tie and tails. Corsages for the women and boutonnieres for the men were a must, so the florist business fit right in. At least once a week Les and Lillian, dressed in formal attire, floated down the stairs of their flat on Page Street, to a waiting cab – elegant people whisked away to some locale for Eastern Star frivolities. No one except us, their upstairs neighbors, knew how they really lived and what their lives were really like.

In fact, they lived in squalor. Lillian was a dirty, actually filthy, housekeeper and a constant whiner. Her husky voice could always be heard saying, "Le-e-e-ester, please take out the

garbage. Le-e-e-ester – don't *do that*" " Lester was a drinker, with a bad temper in private, though he always put on a good face in public. He usually answered with a snarl if she was lucky, and was verbally abusive if she was not. Their sons, Les Jr and Don, were as boisterous and unruly as they were good looking. They were dark haired replicas of their Dad and showed signs of developing tempers just as nasty as his. They practiced on each other and the entire building sometimes shook with the violence of their large bodies bounding off the walls and floor.

When their father, Les, had too much to drink, the object of his abuse was Lillian. Lillian's primary concern was to be sure that if he hit her, the bruise would not show when she wore her formal gown. She bought gowns with long sleeves and high necks, but décolletage was in style and in order to progress up the Chairs of the Eastern Star to become a Grand Matron, she had to be stylish. She had an olive complexion from her Mexican heritage (though she never admitted to that). She could usually cover her bruises with dark makeup. She admitted to having a wonderful recipe for Mexican enchiladas, which her aged mother used to cook. Lillian made enchiladas for us from time to time. I still have her recipe and make it for everyone occasionally. Lee spent many an hour on the phone listening to Lillian's plaintive wails about Les and her boys.

Les Jr and Donnie went to Poly High School near Kezar Stadium. Neither of them had grades good enough to get into Lowell High School, the top academic college prep public school in the City. When Donnie, the younger son, was a senior in high school, a beautiful young blonde girl started visiting him at home in the afternoon while his parents were at the florist shop on Haight Street. She was tall and slender with a page boy hair style. She wore the uniform of the Convent of the Sacred Heart when she arrived, but changed to something more stylish by the time she departed several hours later. She drove her own convertible and it was soon clear that their relationship was not innocent. They spent the afternoon hours lounging in Donnie's bedroom at the back of the house, which was right below mine. It took little imagination to know what they were doing. Her squeals and groans matched his shouts. Her name was Joan Hills and she was the only daughter of Ed Hills, owner of Hills Transportation, a large trucking company in San Francisco. He and his wife, two sons and one daughter lived in a lovely home in fashionable Forest Hills. They were devout Irish Catholics and all the children went to the best private schools.

When Ed Hills discovered his daughter's liaison, he reacted in fury. He took away her car and commanded her not to see this handsome, but lackluster nobody. But she had inherited his own stubborn streak and defied him. "Nobody is going to keep me from him Daddy, not even you. I love him and I'm going to marry him." She attended Lone Mountain College for one year. She made her debut during the December Cotillion season. She insisted that Donnie Price be her official escort and then she insisted on marrying him. Her father was unhappy, but acquiesced, unable to deal with his recalcitrant daughter.

Lillian Price was ecstatic and talked to Lee for hours about every detail she could dredge up about the Hills family. Her younger son Donnie managed to capture the heart of one of the loveliest (and richest) girls in San Francisco! Granted he had to become a practicing Catholic. Granted he didn't have a decent job. All that would change. Mr. Hills would have to give his



son-in-law a good job in the company. He'd just *have* to. The wedding was one of the highlights of the social season. Lillian fussed and planned for weeks about the showers and other events she would attend, but as it turned out she wasn't invited to them. Soon it was clear that she was excluded from all but the mandatory events for the mother of the groom. She was not going to be swept up into the social circle of the Hills. She would be relegated to the position of mother-in-law – to be included when absolutely necessary, but no more than that.

Over the years Joan and Donnie had four sons. But Don never was welcomed into the company like a real Hill. Her father had the last laugh. He assured that his sons, not his son-in-law, would manage Hills Transportation. He made sure his daughter and her four sons were well taken care of, but he went no farther than that. Don Price was always kept at bay – an outsider. The marriage lasted long enough to see all four sons raised and educated, with families of their own, before Joan divorced Don and married someone of her social standing. He was the kind of man her father would have picked for her in the first place – only thirty years late. Lee listened to this saga unfold over the years through the wailing complaints of Lillian and countless hours of telephone visits. By the end Lillian divorced Lester, and married a retired seaman, Rufus Hale. They moved to the outer Sunset District where she catered to his weird sexual needs and cried on Lee's shoulder when she needed comforting, or an infusion of cash.

Mother kept me briefed on the ever evolving Lillian Price Hale saga. In 1978 Mother told me she couldn't stand Lillie's whining about never even getting to see Hawaii like other people got to do. "Never in my who-o-o-ole lifetime Lee! I never even got to see Hawaii!" So Mother gave her \$1,000 and said "Here – take this and go to Hawaii. And promise me I'll never hear another word of whining from you about it." And so she did. And Lillian never whined about Hawaii again.

#### Dorothea Olsen

Dorothea Olsen was another woman Lee talked with frequently. Dorothea lived across the street in a rented flat at 1318 Page Street with her husband Olaf Olsen and her son Jimmy. She was a short, plump, prematurely gray, pleasant faced woman, with a stylish wavy short bob. Jimmy didn't resemble either she or Olaf and she confided to Lee that he was the son of her first husband, the love of her life. James McGuire had been a tall man, with light hair and blue eyes. He was a forest ranger, at home in the woods or in an office. Jimmy looked like him and showed early signs of being tall like his father. After McGuire's death, Dorothea married Olaf, a short, taciturn man with a meaningless smile which always played at his lips. It was not so much from love, but to provide a father for her son and financial help in raising him. She confided to Mother that she tried to please Olaf but his sexual needs were beyond anything that was normal. He demanded sex at least twice each day, morning and night, and more often if she were available. As Jimmy grew older, he insisted that he be called Jimmy McGuire, "after my real father. Olaf Olsen isn't my real father." Dorothea finally got a job when Jimmy was in school and as a diligent worker soon established some independence in her life.

Lee was desperate to find a place in the sun for me, while she worked in the grocery store, Dorothea invited me to join their family for a week long camping trip to Dinky Creek, in Sierra

National Forest. Lee accepted, since she trusted Dorothea. That week was uneventful but a few years later when our two families went to the Tourist House together, I never forgot an incident with Olaf Olsen. At the end of the afternoon we were all on the trail leading back to the Buttermilk House where we had parked the car. That trail was long but not steep. Everyone was strung out on the trail. Olaf was at the rear and I was in front of him. He kept stopping me to look at the flowers and plants. Soon the two of us were a distance behind the others. "Come Margaret, look at this plant – come back here – this is really interesting" I was less interested than I was polite and stepped closer to look, when he put his arms around me and pinned the backside of my body against his own. He pressed me tightly to him, running his hands up and down my body. I squirmed and struggled, "Stop it. Stop it! I don't like it. Let me go" I elbowed him hard enough to break loose and ran up the trail to join the rest of them. He had a little grin on his face when he joined us. Nothing was said. I wanted to tell Mother but I remembered her near hysteria when I was molested by that other young man. I began to think maybe I had imagined it. Maybe nothing had happened. So I said nothing until much, much later. On other occasions over the years when the families were together for a Christmas visit, I made sure I stayed far away from Olaf and was never alone with him, even if it required me to be rude. Once Mother scolded me for being rude, but I still said nothing.

Eventually Dorothea and Olaf, along with Jimmy, moved to a little home in Miraloma Park, near San Francisco City College. Dorothea continued to confide in Mother. Many years later, she called one day, crying hysterically. Olaf, who had been working as a postal carrier for several years, had been arrested. He was charged with innumerable cases of child molestation. The children all lived on his postal route, which was somewhere near the neighborhood where they lived. Dorothea was shocked, humiliated, and traumatized. There were already more than forty incidents, and more were coming in each day. He had molested both girls and boys, but mostly young girls, about ten years old. Some had been seriously injured. Dorothea had been questioned relentlessly about every aspect of her personal life with Olaf and she sobbed to Lee that she had never felt so violated or humiliated in her life. She said she thought living with this man and submitting to his sexual demands over the years had been bad enough, but she never imagined the horror of reliving every detail to police investigators. Then she had to repeat the same testimony to a judge and jury in an open courtroom. Olaf was convicted and sent to San Quentin for thirty years. Thank God he was out of everyone's life.

But not quite. Years later, when I was in my third year at Stanford, Mother telephoned to tell me to come home right away. She had something important to tell me. No, everyone was all right, but she just needed to tell me something in person. When I walked in, Rudy and Mother were in the kitchen. By now, Rudy had a good job with the Teamsters and had many influential friends in both local and state government.

Mother handed me a letter and told me to read it. It was addressed to me and started out "My dearest little Margaret" That caused me to look at the envelope! It was from San Quentin Penitentiary – from one of the inmates. His name was Olaf Olsen. I glanced at Mother and Rudy and puzzled, continued to read. "I dream of you every day and cannot wait until we can be together again. I think of your little body pressed against mine every night as I lay in my lonely bed. I pray you will be patient and wait for me until we can be together again. I want to press your little body to mine and hold you forever. All I think about is getting out of this place

and finding you so we can be together forever ” I couldn't go on reading these lunatic words, though Rudy and I had to laugh at the image of me, now 5 foot 7 inches and weighing 140 pounds, towering over the short, slight, bespectacled Olaf Olsen. However, the ravings of a lunatic mind were not to be trifled with

Mother was enraged at the inadequacy of the prison system. Supposedly, all mail going out or coming in to the prison was censored and prisoners were not allowed to either write to, or receive mail from anyone not previously approved. Further, how did he even get our address since we moved away from the Page Street flat years before! She commanded that Rudy “see to it that something like this could never happen again. I want that man castrated! I want him imprisoned for life!! I want the San Quentin Warden investigated for lapse in his duty to protect the public from his inmates! I want to make sure that this lunatic is put away for the rest of his life!!” Rudy and I agreed but finally started laughing as she continued her tirade. It seemed that no punishment was enough for Olaf Olsen. As a result I realized that there are strange, even lunatic, people in the world. Gratefully we never heard from him or about him again.

### Kitty Gelhar

Kitty and Hans Gelhar were two of Carl and Lee's oldest German friends. Kitty Gelhar often telephoned Lee to confide her marital distress now that Lee was no longer in the grocery store and had more time to listen. Kitty was unhappy with Hans. Their daughter Shirley was nearly grown and Kitty was considering divorce. She claimed he was brutal, thoughtless and brusque. By now he was the Purser for a shipping line and was at sea for several weeks at a time. “Lee, you know I need to have a man. I have always enjoyed sex, but Hans has gotten fatter and fatter. Sex has become almost impossible for him. I don't know what to do. I can't stand to have him touch me any more” Lee listened to her complaints, soothing her with suggestions that might appease. Lee's suggestion was always the same: “Find something else to do to entertain yourself. You don't need sex if you keep busy” She was always amazed that Kitty didn't agree with her. Kitty's complaints escalated. By now Shirley was out of high school and had her first job. Finally she told Lee. “That's it! I've finally had enough. I filed for divorce. It will be final in one year. Right now he has to give me alimony but I have to find a job to support myself. But more important I want to make good money!”

She told Lee that her sister, Hilda Rupp, and Hilda's husband, Elmer Edward Rupp, had moved to San Francisco from Chicago. He was a hair stylist and they opened a beauty salon called Edward's on Judah Street in the Inner Sunset District. They had no children and Hilda was the receptionist. Hilda set a tone of elegance for a neighborhood hair salon. Kitty decided to get her beautician's license and within a few months worked at Edward's Salon. Soon she learned that Elmer loved to play chess, but as yet had found no partner. She told him about her friends, Carl and Lee Huneke. Elmer and Carl started a long friendship based on chess. Hilda's and Lee's friendship also flourished. Since I was away at boarding school Mother could spend time with her new friend, whenever Hilda could get away alone from the shop. In addition, the two couples always had fun together and started traveling together.

After Kitty had worked for Elmer for more than a year she began to think about starting her own business, or perhaps being Elmer's partner. She asked Hilda to intercede for her but the answer was an emphatic “No” Elmer had a quick temper. He considered himself an *artiste* in

styling hair and had already told Hilda he was not about to share his success with anyone else. Further, he and Hilda had a good arrangement with regard to cash business. Income taxes were beginning to increase and cash was king. If income never entered the books it was not taxed. There were many such opportunities in the beauty shop business.

So Kitty decided to go into her own business. It didn't take too long to save enough money if she included her alimony from Hans. She found an affordable beauty shop for sale on O'Farrell Street, just a little west of the downtown area. It soon had a new name – "Katherine's" and several girls worked for her washing, setting, perming and coloring hair, which came into style after the war years. No one had to have gray hair any more!! Soon she was pocketing money the same way that Elmer and Hilda did. She felt successful, but still lonely. "Lee, I'm making good money, but I'm lonely. I really need a man." Lee kept telling her to stay busy, but to no avail.

One day she called, her voice fairly trilling, "Lee the most wonderful thing has happened. I met this wonderful man. He's really a genius. He's a toy inventor and he has a patent on the most marvelous toy. The only problem is he needs \$7,000 in order to get production started. Several stores already have given him orders to buy his toy, but first he must manufacture them. I have the money. I'm thinking of investing it in his business. What do you think?" Lee thought she should be very cautious before parting with her money so easily. "Yes. Good advice Lee. I will be very cautious but I feel good about this. I know this is a good investment. I will easily double or triple my money! And Lee! He's wonderful in bed!"

A few weeks later Kitty called in tears. Though he had been wonderful in bed, he had taken her \$7,000 and vanished just as quickly as he had appeared. No toys – no toy company – no orders – no sex – nothing but a few passionate memories and a hard learned lesson. "Never again, Lee. Never again. I'm just going to work hard and I don't ever want another man in my life." Lee doubted that, but at least Kitty was cured for a while.

#### Paula Schevella and Ferdinand Vrba

After Gus Tham's death, Mother wanted to comply with the bequests in his will as soon as she could. She paid the San Francisco bequests and then had to save up \$1,000 to send to Gus Tham's sister, Paula Tham Schevella in Austria, so Paula could distribute \$250 each to herself, two nieces, Paula Vrba, Linchie Schevella and one nephew, Karl Tham Schevella. That communication started a torrent of complaints about conditions in Europe with poverty and shortages of jobs and goods. Paula Vrba pleaded to her dear Uncle Gus's stepdaughter, Lee Huneke, to bring Paula and her husband Ferdinand Vrba to America. Paula said that before the war Ferdinand Vrba was a prosperous banker with a position in one of the leading banks. Paula was supposedly a skilled executive secretary. My mother was surprised, then thrilled that she might be able to help these worthy distant relatives. She always longed for an extended family. Fini was only a distant cousin. Lee was happy to know Carl's sisters and his mother, but none of that replaced her desire for relatives of her own. Though Gus Tham was only her stepfather, he was the best father she would ever know and she had great affection and respect for him. Paula Schevella Vrba was his niece, the daughter of his dear eldest brother Karl Tham, whose wife Anna died in childbirth, when her third child Karl was born in 1903. At that time Paula (Bautchie) was one year old and her

older sister Carolina (Lynchie) was six years old. All three children were adopted and raised by Paula Tham Schevella, who was childless, and the only sister all of the Tham boys.

Soon Mother arranged for Paula and Ferdinand Vrba to immigrate to America. I was away at boarding school, there was little money to improve apartments and she was ready to fill her time with something new and interesting. Once again Carl did not approve of this venture, but he was too busy to argue with her. Besides, she had been more than generous to his sisters and his mother. It would be difficult to deny her this pleasure.

Paula and Ferdinand arrived at the San Francisco airport, looking humble and bewildered, as only new immigrants can look. Daddy and Mother took them home. The first few days were spent getting them appropriate clothes, renting an apartment with furniture, and getting them settled. Paula, (Bautchie) and Ferdinand (Nandie), were soon telling about their lives before, during and after the war. They both described their lives before the war in glowing terms. Then they were separated during the war and could not find each other for several years. Each thought the other dead and had found a lover.

After the war, they rediscovered each other and tried to put their marriage back together. Then the opportunity to come to America seemed like an ideal solution to a sticky relationship in Europe. Both Bautchie and Nandie seemed sincere in their story and Mother bought it hook, line and sinker.

It didn't take too long before Mother discovered the truth. Nandie was a weekend drunk. Bautchie wanted to get rid of him. She thought they could come to America, get him settled, dump him and go home to Austria to rejoin her lover. Mother, in her naiveté, went about the difficult task of finding a job for immigrants whose English was minimal. The best she could do for Paula was a job at Saint Joseph's Hospital near Buena Vista Park. The Sisters of Saint Joseph who ran the Hospital were kind and created a job for her. It involved menial work with prospects of working into a position as a Practical Nurse. According to Paula, once an executive secretary, this was a serious comedown, but she decided to make the best of it.

Nandie was more difficult to place because his experience as a bank executive did not translate very well in America since he did not speak English. Mother persisted. She pulled every string she knew, and finally persuaded Schlage Lock to give Nandie a job on the assembly line. The work was menial but soon he met other immigrants like himself, who were doing whatever was necessary to survive in their new country. Many of them, like Nandie, had come from better positions, but were making the best of it.

Mother thought most of her problems were behind her once she got them jobs. She was ready for a deep sigh of relief. She and Carl wanted to be hospitable and hosted the couple many nights and every weekend. Lee and Carl took them to Yosemite, Carmel, Sonoma and Tahoe, to introduce them to the beauty of their new country. Mother asked what their favorite foods were and made sure to have plenty on hand for them. Nandie admitted to a fondness for something stronger than beer, wine, and whisky— something, say like – Slivovitz! Slivovitz was like Czechoslovakian moonshine – white lightning. It was simply the most potent alcohol fit for human consumption. Mother, who hardly sipped at wine or beer, smiled and obliged.

Now Nandie was in his element and celebrated appropriately. Slivovitz was downed in a shot glass, and after two or three shots, straight up, in true Slovak style, the glass was hurled at the fireplace with shouts of triumph. After several shot glasses met the same fate, Daddy insisted that the bottle be retired to the cabinet, under Nandie's protest of course. That night after Paula and Ferdinand walked home to their own apartment, Daddy laid down the law to Mother. "This has to stop. He's a drunk. I don't want him around here any more. No more!" Mother agreed and said she would talk to them.

When she did, Paula confessed to Lee privately that she wanted to divorce Ferdinand and go home to Austria. Lee was astonished, but soon understood that she had been duped. Lee said, "Now I understand. You wanted to get him far away from Austria and get rid of him, so you were going to dump him on me." Paula cried and protested, claiming that was too harsh, she was really a good woman, she just couldn't help herself, et cetera, et cetera. When Ferdinand learned of the state of things, he cried to Mother, "But I love her, I love her. I don't want her to leave. I want her to stay here with me in America. I like it here. I don't want to go back to Austria."

In the end, Paula went back home to Austria and filed for divorce. Ferdinand stayed alone in the little rented apartment, continued working at Schlage Lock, saved his money diligently and drank himself into oblivion with Slivovitz from Friday night to Sunday night. Then he sobered up and got ready to go to Schlage Lock first thing Monday morning. He never missed a day of work and he never missed a weekend drunk. Mother was bitterly disappointed at Paula's duplicitous character. It had meant a great deal to her to have Gus Tham's niece in this country. She assumed Paula would be just as wonderful as Gus was. Instead she was left with Paula's alcoholic ex-husband as a reminder that no good deed goes unpunished. She wrote in her journal: "This is a closed chapter. I threw the key to my heart over the bridge and now I'll start taking care of myself."

After a few years Ferdinand saved almost enough money to buy some real estate, and asked Mother to help him find something. She found two flats on Seventh Avenue, a couple of blocks south of Lincoln Avenue. He bought them with \$3,500 help from her and rented the lower flat. He moved into the upstairs flat and rented one of the two bedrooms to a Schlage Lock employee, an immigrant from Germany, named Richard Bachman. Richard didn't drink, and Ferdinand was a relatively quiet drunk, once he quit smashing glasses. He now had to buy his own and he couldn't afford to keep smashing them. He stopped making rousing shouts of triumph throughout the night and was relatively easy to live with.

Mother saw to it that Ferdinand got settled in good fashion. She could take him off her list of people to look out for. In the process she got acquainted with his new housemate, Richard Bachman. He was a quiet man. He had come from a much more genteel life in Germany but was content with his routine job, working on an assembly line at Schlage Lock. Before the war he was married and had a son. His wife was Jewish; he was not. At first they both believed she would be spared identification as a Jew because she was married to a German and their son was half German. When Hitler escalated his persecution of the Jews in Germany, he

made it clear that Jews were identifiable through the mother's lineage and both his wife and son were in danger of being taken away to a concentration camp

Before they could make their plan of escape, their ten year old son became sick with influenza and died. They grieved together but knew they had to proceed with their plan for escape. Eventually they agreed that she would leave him and take asylum in another location. They would meet at an agreed time and location and make their way to America, where he had a distant relative who would sponsor them. When he arrived at their meeting place, she was not there. Though he waited for her as long as he dared, he never heard of her again. Finally, he left for America, hoping she would join him later. By now he had given up hope. Mother grew to like Richard Bachman and in the back of her mind an idea was brewing.

Finally she said to Kitty Gelhar, "Kitty, I'd like to introduce you to a very nice man I met. His name is Richard Bachman. He lives with Ferdinand" Kitty had heard all about Lee's adventures with Paula and Ferdinand so this was not a resounding recommendation, but she had been without a man for long enough to be at least mildly interested. "Is he good in bed?" Lee said, "I have no idea. You'll have to find that out for yourself."

So Mother made the introductions. She let nature take its course, knowing she would hear the full report. Sure enough, not too much time passed before Kitty reported, "Lee, this time I'm in love. Richard is a wonderful man. And he's wonderful in bed! I'm going to spend the rest of my life with him. He's going to move in with me right away and we will buy some property of our own just like you did." And that's exactly what they did. Eventually they bought a four-plex in San Jose off Winchester and they were happily married for the rest of his life.

Mother felt that her responsibility for Ferdinand had come to an end. She had loaned him \$3,500 to purchase his flats on Seventh Avenue and she figured someday she'd ask him for the money back when she really needed it, but not right now. He took no more roommates and continued working at Schlage Lock each weekend, getting drunk each weekend until he retired. Too much Slivovitz seven days a week speeded his demise. He willed the flats to Paula, his ex-wife in Austria, since there was no one else he ever loved as much.

Mother did get her \$3,500 back. After my second year in college, she wanted to buy me a car. Rudy "got a deal" at the Mercury dealer on Van Ness Avenue and if the cash were provided today, not tomorrow, but today only, a sporty little two door 1953 Mercury Monterey, with a yellow bottom and black top, would be hers. Mother was short of cash as usual, and she couldn't ask Carl for any, but she took me with her to Ferdinand's flat and we went upstairs to collect the money. He was sober, cordial and happy to pay her back. The flats were much more valuable today and he said it was the best thing he ever did. That was the last time she ever saw him. Paula called Mother years later when Ferdinand died to tell her she, Paula, was now an heiress and had ordered the flats sold and the money sent to her. Mother laughed to herself. Now it was really a closed chapter. She didn't ever want to think of them again.

#### Elsie Lauritzen

Mother had a friend, Elsie Lauritzen, from way back. Probably from Butchertown. She worked for years as a private secretary for J. B. Johnson a Vice President of Hercules Powder.

Company – a big position in a big company Elsie was one of Mother's classy friends. She was attractive, never married, dressed well, and stayed close to her father after her mother died

Elsie and her sister were dutiful children and good sisters to each other After their mother died, they took their father to Mexico for a vacation They went on a train and while they were riding through the desert their father went out to the observation platform at the back of the train to have a smoke. They never saw him again Needless to say the vacation was over When they arrived at the next town they hired someone to drive them and went with the police along the train route to look for him. They searched relentlessly but never found a trace of him This was a tragedy that Elsie and her sister found hard to accept – first their mother's death and then the loss of their father in this cruel way

Eventually Elsie moved in with a woman friend in San Francisco, named Dagmar Dagmar was strange – very masculine in manner and dress. Their relationship was always a little suspect. When Dagmar died, Elsie was bereft. For a while Lee was her confidante and talked to her frequently She reconnected with my mother for solace, since she had few friends. When Mother helped her dispose of Dagmar's personal belongings, she noticed that they were peculiar Jewelry, clothes, even underwear were all very masculine. Her "perfume" was a popular male after shave lotion. Mother said little but observed that the relationship between her friend Elsie and Dagmar was probably different. Dagmar was probably lesbian and Elsie, always somewhat naïve, was probably a participant, though Elsie never explicitly shared this with Lee. Understanding the probable nature of the relationship made Mother even more sympathetic toward Elsie.

When Elsie was in her fifties, J B Johnson's wife died After a "decent interval" her boss wooed and won Elsie, but she was filled with trepidation. She was after all, a fifty year old, single woman, who confessed to her friend Poldi that she had never "been with a man" She told Lee that she was worried about knowing how to behave with a man and asked for advice. Lee assured her that it was not such a big deal and that she should reach out to life. So she did She asked Lee to be the matron of honor, her only attendant at her wedding on February 6, 1952 at the Lutheran Church in San Francisco. John was a tall, distinguished, older, but exuberant bridegroom, and kissed the shy Elsie soundly and happily at the conclusion of the ceremony He was very affectionate and kept his arm around her during the reception, as she demurely smiled and ducked her head Clearly she had married someone with a lot of life left in him.

They went off to Europe after the wedding for a month long honeymoon. My mother did not hear from Elsie for a long time and she finally called her friend just to keep in touch. Elsie seemed remote – quiet – not inclined to share anything but the most routine information with her old friend. Yes the honeymoon was lovely She enjoyed seeing Europe so much. She had never been there before. John was a wonderful man She was very happy All of this with a flat, though pleasant, well modulated voice. She was too busy to see Lee. She was so busy in her new life with John Mother thought to herself that maybe Elsie now felt above associating with Lee and Carl, since she was married to an important, well educated executive in a big company But then Mother decided that was silly More likely, Elsie was now happily



married to J B. Johnson and was swept up in a busy and wonderful life. My mother was happy for her friend

Some time later Elsie called Mother and reconnected the friendship. Mother invited Elsie and J B to dinner at Terry and Marge's home on Westfield Drive in Menlo Park. She thought J.B Johnson and Terry might have something in common since J.B. was a chemical engineer, as was Terry. J B and Terry hit it off. J B. laughed about his opportunity to buy the Montecatini patents on polyethylene for Hercules, but advised against it because he thought polyethylene had no future. They all enjoyed a pleasant evening together. Terry and I told about building our new home on Tioga Drive in Sharon Heights. It would be completed in May and we suggested that J B. and Elsie come visit us when we had moved in.

Mother decided after that evening that Elsie's abrupt turnoff of communication after her marriage was purely the result of a now busy life, full of participation in her husband's activities, with little time left for old friends. But we all noticed that evening that J B. and Elsie were very subdued in their demeanor to each other. The exuberant John as a bridegroom, had been replaced by a quiet, polite, somewhat distant man, always courteous to Elsie, but with little evident affection.

When Terry and I moved into our new home on Tioga Drive in Sharon Heights, we discovered that J B. and Elsie Johnson had bought a home just 1 ½ blocks away on Tioga. They seemed surprised to know that we were just down the street. In fact they seemed downright concerned! Though invitations were extended and courtesies exchanged, the couple seemed aloof and surprised, even somewhat disturbed, to know that Daddy and Mother were frequent visitors. Within a couple of weeks a "For Sale" sign appeared in front of their house and they and their furnishings were gone long before it sold. Mother never heard from her friend Elsie or Elsie's husband John again.

#### Bill and Margaret Hillebrandt

When my parents first went into the grocery business Mother made it her business to find out what was going on in the neighborhood. Two blocks south of their store on Page Street new owners bought the grocery store. It was smaller than the Page Lyon Grocery and posed no real competition since they didn't carry meat and sausages, nor did they have a large produce display. The new owners were a German couple named Bill and Margaret Hillebrandt and they had a little boy named Arthur who was about my age. They lived in a rented flat above the store and they worked hard together to make a success of the business. Mother contacted them, hoping to meet another woman with common interests. But Margaret Hillebrandt, though a hard worker, was an unwilling participant in the grocery store. She preferred to stay at home and raise her son. Bill was the real businessman. Mother had more in common with him. They were all busy and there was little time for anything but occasional business talk.

Over the years they kept up with each other. When Mother told Bill that she and Daddy bought the grocery store building, Bill thought that they should do something like that too. Soon the Hillebrandts bought the building their store was in. By then Daddy had opened his own stained glass studio and Mother had run her grocery store alone for several years. By the time Mother and Daddy sold their grocery business, Margaret Hillebrandt begged to stop working too.

Finally Bill relented since they were doing well. He hired other help so she could stay home more. Margaret was now free to be active in the Ladies Auxiliary of the Lutheran Church that they attended

When Bill found out that Mother and Daddy bought Marina Court Apartments, a thirty unit apartment building in the Marina district, he was amazed. Maybe Carl was doing better than he thought. Lee made it sound easy. She insisted that you just got a good realtor to help you find a good building in the best neighborhood, got a loan from the bank and bought it. But there was something missing in this equation. Bill was running the grocery store and couldn't find time to go looking for a building. Margaret wasn't interested in doing it for him. As with many good intentions, the years slipped by and they still had not bought another building. Now that Mother had time to talk, Margaret called her from time to time to glean information and share gossip.

Eventually Mother introduced them to a realtor named Victor Urban. He was a short, dark haired Armenian, with thinning, straight, black hair and a big smile. He seemed to know a lot about apartment buildings in San Francisco and he said he could help them. He smiled warmly at the slim, blonde, blue eyed Margaret Hillebrandt, who could not drive a car and assured her he'd be happy to drive her around to look at buildings. Then she could decide what to show Bill when he had time. She smiled back at Victor Urban, deciding then and there maybe she could do this after all.

She reported back to my mother from time to time about all the buildings she had looked at with Mr. Urban, whom she now called Victor. They looked for several months, but somehow the right building was never available, or was too expensive or was sold before they could make an offer. Although Bill was getting impatient, he understood that these things took time. One day my mother got a frantic phone call from Margaret Hillebrandt. "Lee, Lee, I don't know what to do!" Lee tried to calm her down but she was near hysteria. "Calm down. What happened? Calm down."

Margaret unfolded a tale of long afternoon searches for apartment buildings with Victor. Though they never found quite the right building, they were not wasting their time. They sometimes rested after a long day of looking at buildings. "Today we parked at the Beach, in a quiet parking place off the Great Highway. We were enjoying each other's company when Victor grasped his chest and started choking. We were both in disarray, but I put myself together as quickly as I could and ran out to the Great Highway where I waved at a car and it stopped. The driver went to call for an ambulance and I ran back to Victor. Finally someone came. The police came too. They put Victor in the ambulance and took him to the Hospital where he died." Mother was shocked and expressed her sympathy, but asked again, "How can I help you?" I don't want Bill to see the police report. Victor didn't have all his clothes on. I'm afraid it will say something that Bill might misunderstand." Mother listened and assured her everything would be all right. She was just upset. Bill would understand. He probably would never read the police report anyway. "But", she thought to herself, "if Bill read the police report, he just might understand too well."

After Victor Urban was laid to rest, Bill found a new realtor. He decided he would just get someone to help him more in the grocery store and he would start looking for apartment buildings himself. He was astonished to find an appropriate building within two weeks. It wasn't in the Marina District like he wanted, but it was a nice eighteen unit building in the West Portal neighborhood. Now they owned an apartment building like my parents.

Some time later, after Mother brought over her relatives from Austria, Margaret Hillebrandt called to ask advice about bringing over her niece. She said her sister's daughter, Gesine, from her home village in Ficksburg, had begged Hillebrandts to sponsor her. The only problem was that she wanted them to sponsor her boyfriend, Herbert Kruse, as well. He was a chimney sweep by trade and that was hardly a good trade in San Francisco, where most homes were heated by clean natural gas. Gesine and Herbert had been together for a long time and wanted to marry before they came to America. Margaret said she didn't mind sponsoring her niece, but she didn't feel it was their responsibility to bring over someone they didn't even know. Gesine protested that she loved him and could not live without him, but Margaret and Bill were adamant. Gesine, yes. Herbert, no. He would have to find his own way over. They suggested that Gesine bring him over herself after a few years – after she had established herself. That would be a good test of their true love. If Gesine and Herbert really loved each other their love would last for a few years.

They brought Gesine over alone. She was blonde, blue eyed and slender and looked a lot like her Aunt Margaret. She acted like her too – a little vague and vacant eyed, but a willing worker. She lived with the Hillebrandts in their home on Sloat Boulevard near Nineteenth Avenue in San Francisco. She soon had a cleaning job in St. Joseph's Hospital. She was happy to be in America but she was lonely for the company of young people and mostly, she missed Herbert. She met a very nice Mexican man named Jose, who sold cleaning supplies to the Hospital. She was attracted to his handsome dark looks. He liked the way she looked too. They enjoyed spending time together and their friendship blossomed. Gesine was happy because it was a good way for her to have a nice time and be away from the house where she had a room with Bill and Margaret. Within a few months she learned she was pregnant. When she told Jose and asked if he would marry her, he was shocked and surprised that she would ask such a thing. "I have a wife and three children in Mexico. I send all my money to them. I can't have another wife. You must take care of this some other way. I don't even have any money to give you." He left, offering no help and no solution. Gesine was heartbroken. She loved him and would have married him.

In tears, Gesine went to her Aunt Margaret and told her the problem. Margaret was hysterical and scolded her unmercifully, "How could you be so stupid? You bring shame to our family." She didn't dare tell Bill. She called Mother and told her what had happened. "Lee please tell me who to call to take care of this?" Mother said, "Why me? I don't know anyone. How would I know who to call?" Margaret persisted and finally Mother agreed to see if she could get some information. One phone call led to another and finally she had answers for Margaret and Gesine.

Gesine called Mother and cried, telling her the abortion had been done in the basement of Bill and Margaret's home, at night, with little light. The medical practitioner had covered his face

so she could not recognize him. She had to meet him alone and he worked alone. He took cash from her first, before anything else was done. She felt that he created sanitary conditions in a difficult environment. After he finished he gave her medication but instructed her not to go to a hospital for help if she showed signs of infection. They would be required to file a police report and she would be prosecuted. She thanked my mother and said she hoped to have other children some day and feared that this might somehow prevent that. After a few days Gesine called again and told Mother she had signs of infection and asked where she should go. Mother called Dr. Paul and he kindly agreed to treat Gesine with no questions asked and no reports made to the police. She recovered and soon was back at work.

A few months later Gesine persuaded her Aunt Margaret and Uncle Bill to sponsor Herbert Kruse, since she had saved enough money to pay for him to come over. Within a few weeks he was in San Francisco and the lovers embraced with joy. They planned a wedding immediately at the Lutheran Church. Gesine wore a white dress and veil and Herbert was dressed in a dark suit. They had no money for a celebration after the wedding. The Hillebrandts were not inclined to help, so Daddy and Mother hosted a dinner for them and the wedding party at a nearby restaurant. The Hillebrandts were happy to see Gesine married and hoped their home would once again be theirs alone. They were cured of the urge to bring over more relatives from Germany. They were content to enjoy their son Arthur's success as an accountant and his marriage to Jeanine and their resulting grandchildren. Though they continued a relationship with Gesine and Herbert, they kept a guarded distance.

Herbert soon found a job as a mechanic with United Airlines in San Francisco where he worked for forty years. Gesine worked until she got pregnant and was thrilled to have a daughter, Barbara, followed by a son, Walter. She cleaned houses and they both worked for a caterer on weekends for many years to make extra money. They began to buy real estate – flats in the Mission District – and eventually owned several properties. They bought a lovely home in San Mateo in the hills. Eventually they enjoyed many trips all over the world, with free airfare as part of his employee benefits. They educated both children and later savored the joys of being grandparents. Over the years my mother always smiled to herself, as she saw their success.



Upper Left: Dorothea Olsen, Olaf Olsen and Jimmy McGuire (Her son by her first marriage.)



Right: Mother with Lillian Price Hale About 1986

Below: Richard and Kitty Bachman





Upper Left:  
Lee and  
Ferdinand  
Vrba. Around  
1951



Lower Right:  
Paula Tham Schevella Vrba.



Above: July 1982 we visit Paula Vrba in Altmunster, Austria. Warren, Marge and Connie with Paula

Below: Paula, Marge and Terry with Paula in her apartment.



# MA, MOTHER AND ME

## A MEMOIR

### Chapter 11 More Real Estate and Grandchildren 1958

Once Mother had finished paying Stanford tuitions she had more money and was eager to find another piece of real estate. She still remembered "Tiny" Small's advice to her so many years before: "location. location. location." No matter how diligently she watched the papers and the listings, she had trouble finding anything for sale in the Marina District that she could afford. But Cow Hollow was just a few blocks away and it was almost as good. It was just above Lombard Street in the Marina District and extended up to Pacific Heights.

She found eight spacious Victorian flats at 1919-1933 Greenwich Street for \$55,000. The buildings had some good qualities, although they were very old and in poor condition. But the most important thing about the property was the large piece of land. It was 100 feet by 100 feet – 10,000 square feet one block away from Lombard Street, one of the major thoroughfares in San Francisco. Already motels were flourishing on Lombard Street as a less expensive alternative to expensive downtown hotels. Greenwich Street was even considered as a possible one way street parallel to Lombard which would potentially make it a second, equally valuable location for motels. Before that idea expanded, another idea developed. She was offered a handsome profit before she even closed escrow. A group of doctors wanted to buy the eight flats on the huge piece of land for a retirement center. They would tear down the old historic buildings to construct their new building.

Once again, Mother told Daddy what they were going to do. And once again, Daddy said no. They argued bitterly. And then there was silence for a week or two. None of the above proposed ideas came to fruition, so to my father's dismay, the deal was done and they became owners of eight Victorian flats. The papers were signed November 14, 1956. As in the past Daddy wanted nothing to do with it and Mother was on her own. She was grateful for her good contractor, Mr. Coudin. The buildings rode through the 1906 earthquake on their old brick foundations. Now they needed lots of work.

On October 27, 1956, Terry called my parents from San Diego. I had given birth to a baby boy at 5:15 that morning. His name was Timothy Michael Blaine. He weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces and was 20 inches long, all perfectly normal statistics. I had a hard delivery but I was fine. Mother couldn't wait to talk to me but there was no phone at my bedside at the Navy Hospital on Coronado Island in San Diego Bay. She wanted to send a huge bouquet of flowers, but she



learned that I would be sent home the next day so it was not practical to send flowers. She worried about who would take care of me, but Terry assured her that I had arranged for someone to come in and take care of me. So she satisfied herself by sending a large bouquet to our apartment along with a huge box of baby things and toys for Timmy. She couldn't wait to see me. She wanted my life to be so much better than hers had been.

The next day she talked to me on the phone several times, anxious to know that I was well. I was struggling to nurse the baby, but my nipples were cracked and the baby's suckling caused bleeding and pain. Further the baby started projectile vomiting and couldn't keep my milk down. Terry had to stay on the ship every third night so I was frequently alone, trying to get used to the new regimen. The woman I had hired to help was totally incompetent, though she had claimed to be experienced. I let her go after a couple of days and took care of myself.

Mother kept urging me to stop nursing and go back to the Hospital for help. Finally I did that on Halloween evening, when Timmy was four days old. "For heaven's sake! You have a bladder infection! You're really sick!" As if they didn't believe me before. As soon as that was treated I began to get well and things got back to normal. "But mother, nothing's really normal. It's really hard!" She consoled me, remembering how hard it was for her when Rudy was born. She prayed that my life would be easier. She couldn't wait for us to return to the bay area so she could see to it that I had help.

Within a week I called with wonderful news. "Mother, the ship is moving to Vallejo before Christmas and we'll be moving up there with the baby. The ship will be in drydock and Terry will be home every night for the next four months." Mother was relieved to know we would be moving to Vallejo with the ship, two weeks before Christmas. She wanted to see me and the baby for herself. What a wonderful Christmas gift!

The days passed, with phone calls back and forth each day, and finally we arrived in the yellow and black Mercury coupe, now crammed with baby belongings. We came up the stairs into the house with Timmy and Mother took the baby in her arms and inspected him closely. "He looks just like you honey", she smiled at Daddy. But she was most anxious to see me. "You're too thin", she said. "How much weight did you gain during your pregnancy?" "Only six pounds", I admitted. The Navy doctors had been adamant about keeping weight down during pregnancy and I lost even more when I was sick. I now weighed less than 135 pounds and Mother was determined to see me gain some weight and regain my health. I stayed with them for a few days, waiting for our Navy housing in Vallejo. Terry flew back to San Diego to bring the ship up to drydock in Vallejo.

Once we were settled in our Navy housing in Vallejo, Mother was eager to show us the new Greenwich flats. She was overjoyed when Terry said he wanted to

see them too. She showed us the still unfinished wreck of a flat which had been occupied by a group of Bohemian individuals who had their own original ideas about interior décor. One room was painted completely black – every inch of it – even the ceilings, door knobs, floors and window casings. The corner of one room was designated an additional toilet area since there were several residents and only the one toilet in the bathroom. They just peed in the corner and covered it with rags and then peed again – and again. The urine soaked wood had to be cut out and replaced.

The painters were still working on covering the black paint with white paint and it was costing a fortune. The bathroom and kitchen were in truly deplorable condition – after all, they were built in 1890, sixteen years before the 1906 earthquake. Terry was excited at the prospect of what could be done with these spacious flats. Mother was working with Mr. Couden to modernize them. It seemed there was nothing that he couldn't do. It just cost money – a lot of money. She decided she would just have to do it and face my father later when she needed money to pay property taxes. But she was excited at the idea that Terry seemed to be interested in her new building.

Mother and Daddy enjoyed our frequent visits while we lived in Vallejo. Timmy grew bigger and soon was smiling at his Grandpa and Grandma, though still spitting sour milk at the same time. Even Honey Boy enjoyed sitting up and watching the baby. All too soon, we returned to San Diego. Since Terry would leave the Navy in June, he was in the final stages of selecting a job. My parents said nothing, but hoped we would be nearby. They reasoned to themselves that surely two Stanford graduates would not want to move too far away.

But it was not to be. We told them that we would move to Richland, Washington where Terry would work for General Electric at the Hanford Atomic Energy Plant in the southeast desert of the state of Washington. My parents were sad but resigned. They had sent me to Dominican to get the best education, and then to Stanford, where I met Terry. It was only natural that I would follow wherever he had a job. But, somehow, it didn't seem fair. I would be far away from home.

In June we arrived in San Francisco with Timmy, packed in the back seat of our little car. We stayed for a couple of nights and then we were off to Washington to find a new home and make a new life. Mother was sorry to see us go but felt happy that I was an independent woman, capable of coping with my new life. Mother would not be satisfied until she came up to Richland to be sure we were living in a decent place. Within a few weeks she and Daddy did just that. They enjoyed the warm dry summer climate in the eastern Washington desert as a respite from the San Francisco fog. The little two bedroom house we had rented was modern and in a nice neighborhood so they left, content that we were well settled for the time being.

In a few months I told my mother I was expecting another baby “I thought you knew about birth control?” “I do Mother, but Terry's a good Catholic and we were trying to use the rhythm method of birth control. I guess it doesn't work very well” Mother groaned She knew there had to be a down side to all this virginity before marriage. Now she was getting a taste of it. The baby would be born in Spring, around Easter time. Timmy would be only seventeen months old. We were going to buy a house and wanted my parents to come and visit us when the new baby was born.

Mother was on a roll with the Greenwich Street flats and she was itching to buy more real estate Now that she had someone like Mr Coudin to work with, she had more confidence to look at other buildings in different neighborhoods. Tiny Small called her and drawled, “Huneke, I want you to look at a terrific building on Russian Hill that just came on the market. It's at the corner of Union and Hyde – the heart of Russian Hill You told me you're getting tired of so many tenants, so this one is terrific. It has the Searchlight Market and two other stores on the ground floor – an antique shop and a florist. But that's not the best part! The lot has unlimited height zoning. That means you could build a skyscraper on that land someday, with fabulous views of the bay The price is terrific because I don't think the owners know they have such a jewel of a building ” She inspected the building with Tiny and they both climbed the steep stairs all the way to the roof deck. She looked westward to the Golden Gate Bridge, and she was hooked She could see that skyscraper in her mind already

The apartments had some strange features, left over from an earlier era. The building was constructed in 1911, five years after the big earthquake, and the architecture reflected the city's need to provide additional spaces for people to live in the fast growing city Each apartment had provision for a “Murphy bed” someplace in the apartment, which allowed for additional occupants to have their own bed tucked away during the day and pulled out from a drawer, or closet or out from under a bathroom floor The floor of several bathrooms had been raised up two feet to accommodate a full sized mattress on rollers underneath the floor It was ingenious, though archaic, but Mother was enchanted with it. Further, she was thrilled at the prospect of at least half the rent coming from commercial tenants, which she thought would be easier to deal with than the constant nagging of apartment tenants.

There was one problem. She was short of cash She asked Rudy and Ev if they had \$5,000 to help buy the building, but they didn't. She knew Carl wouldn't help her if she just approached him with a straight story In her mind she couldn't forget Terry's interest in the Greenwich Street flats. She could really use him as her ally in figuring out how to fix old buildings. Maybe Marge and Terry would be more interested in coming back to San Francisco if they were partners in a building. So she phoned us in Richland “Yes we can get together \$5,000 We'll send it to you ” “Don't you want to know about the building first?” “Sure”, Terry said, “But if you like it, then that's good enough for us.”

Finally she had to tell Daddy "Carl, listen to me! This is a wonderful building It has a grocery store and two small stores on the first floor and ten apartments above. It's a charming old Victorian building But, most important, the lot is zoned "unlimited height" which means that someday, if the building gets too old, or has to be torn down, we can build a skyscraper on it. And if we do, it will have a magnificent view of the Golden Gate Bridge. And best of all, the cable car runs right in front of the building. Everyone is beginning to think the cable cars are a wonderful thing in San Francisco!" She was excited. She knew this time he would agree.

But Daddy remained silent. He looked at her as if she had lost her mind. "Lee, you just bought that big pile of firewood on Greenwich Street a year ago and you can't pay the taxes for that. You keep running to me for money Now you want to buy another old pile of wood that could burn down any time. No. I don't want to hear any more. Not another word "

Then Mother told him about our interest and her idea that we might be motivated to return to San Francisco if we were partners in the building In November 1957, the papers were sent to us in Richland to be signed and then presented to my father He shook his head and growled at Mother, "When will you give up with these buildings?" And then he signed

That first Christmas in Richland Timmy was fourteen months old Mother asked if there was something special we wanted for Christmas. Terry wanted a movie camera so he could take movies of Timmy before he got any older And we asked for a few toys for Timmy since he had only had homemade toys up until then. We moved so much since his birth we couldn't haul around a lot of toys so we just made new ones everywhere we went: empty beer cans on a string; an oatmeal box with things inside, clothespins in an empty bottle, things like that.

A few weeks before Christmas a large box arrived from a camera store in San Francisco. The box held a movie camera, projector, movie screen and everything else you could possibly need in order to make and view home movies. We were amazed but gratefully accepted. Terry started learning how to work everything so he would be ready for Christmas morning.

A few days before Christmas, another huge box arrived It was full of every kind of toy a toddler could possible want. There were several push toys and several pull toys, a wooden mailbox with multi-shaped blocks inside. It went on and on Timmy was so excited on Christmas morning He didn't know where to turn first. Terry took movies of every move he made so we could show them to my parents the next time we were together It was a wonderful day

We found a little three bedroom, one bath, ranch house to buy at the corner of Tinkle and Cottonwood. The baby was three weeks late so instead of moving in

after he was born, Terry had to do the move alone on Easter Sunday, while I was in the hospital. My second son was born on April 2, 1958, on Hartnell Blaine's birthday, so we named him Gregory Hartnell Blaine. He was a happy baby and I didn't need any help, so my parents decided to wait and come to Richland later for his Baptism. At the last minute, Daddy's work schedule was complicated with new orders and no men to help him with the windows. So Mother brought Nona Prini along to visit. We had Gregory baptized and enjoyed our time together. When Mother got back, she said, "Honey, you have to come with me next time. Little Gregory is so cute. His black hair stands straight up –like a Cherokee Indian. He doesn't look like a Huneke. The little family is so darling and their house is very cute." Mother and Daddy then planned to make a trip with their friends, Elmer and Hilda Rupp, to visit us in Richland.

They arrived several months later, when the weather was very warm and they enjoyed playing with the children in the large backyard. Mother told us about the building on Russian Hill in San Francisco, in which we were all partners. The two little boys were excited to have their Grandma and Grandpa visit, along with a second pair of "grandparents." Each night Terry barbecued outside. The two little boys watched intently as the men sat looking at the chessboard. Each evening as the weather cooled, we all went for long walks. When they had to leave, everyone hugged and cried. We promised to come home to visit for Thanksgiving. It was getting harder each year to be apart.

In October 1958 Lee got a strange phone call from Julius Tham, Gus Tham's brother. He and his wife Harriet now lived in the Sunset District in a two bedroom bungalow. Their adult daughter Margaret had tuberculosis when she was a young woman and had one and a half of her lungs removed. She spent most of her life as a semi invalid, not even able to play the piano she loved. Her sister Florence, with husband Chic Schwarting and their son Richard, also lived in the household. The three of them occupied a bedroom in the basement of the bungalow throughout their marriage.

After Rudy became a leader in the Teamsters Union, Julius and Harriet Tham asked him about the possibility of Margaret getting a job. It was urgent that Margaret get some kind of health insurance and that was difficult with her health history. Rudy obliged and Margaret's life turned around. It seemed her curtailed life was over restrictive and she was quite capable of leading a much more active life. She turned out to be a very capable, loyal and worthy employee for Rudy's Local 856 – Freight Checkers and Clerks – for many productive years.

When Mother heard Julius' voice she knew something was terribly wrong. He was distraught and could hardly gather his thoughts to tell her what the problem was. "Poldi, I don't know how to tell you this. I wanted to do something good during my lifetime. I wanted to help my family in Austria. My niece Wilma is married to Josef Mahdahl – a good man – they live in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. Josef is a very devout Catholic and this does not work so well

in Bratislava, which is still under Communist control. They have a son – an only child named Egon – who lives with them. He's not religious, not a Catholic, but he got in trouble with the government. Wilma asked me to help. She asked if I could bring him over to America.”

Mother had a nagging doubt about where this recital was headed. She remembered too well her last experience with Gus Tham's niece Paula Vrba and her husband Ferdinand, who she brought over with the noblest intentions. “So what did you do Julius?” she asked quietly.

Julius sobbed quietly as he continued, “I agreed to sponsor him so he could get out of Czechoslovakia and come to San Francisco. But they said I had to have a co-signer because I was too old and I no longer worked. So I persuaded Ferdinand Vrba, my niece Paula's ex husband to co-sign since he works at Schlage Locks and he owns his home. But Egon still couldn't get an exit permit so he and another young man, a good friend, fled at night and swam the river to get across to Germany. Bullets were shooting over their heads, but once they were in Germany my sponsorship and my money for plane fare allowed Egon to exit Germany and come to San Francisco. I met him at the airport and brought him to my house. But he only stayed for a few days before he left and didn't return. Poldi I think something is wrong. I think he might be sick. I think he's downtown someplace. I don't know where he is. I don't know what to do.”

She asked quietly, “And what do you want me to do?” He told her he was throwing himself on her mercy. He had taken on more than he could handle. He couldn't bear the thought of his brother's grandchild sick and alone on the streets in downtown San Francisco. “Please Poldi – you've got to find him. You've got to get Rudy to help you. I think he's alone on the street someplace.”

Finally Mother told him she would see what she could find out. She didn't dare tell my father. He had already had a bellyful of Ferdinand and Paul Vrba, Gus Tham's relatives, whom Lee had brought over. That was a disaster and he was not about to allow that kind of thing to happen again. So she called Rudy and he put the word out that he was looking for a young guy named Egon Mahdahl, down on his luck, alone and on the streets in San Francisco.

It didn't take too long before Rudy found him. Mother and Rudy went down south of Market to Skid Row. They found him sitting on a street corner, very drunk, shoes without socks, pants that had been peed in, shirt and coat dirty. He looked up at them with a silly grin, booze bottle in his hand and my mother's heart leapt. Even as bad as he looked they both saw the striking resemblance to Gus Tham.

She looked at Rudy, “I can't leave him here. And I can't take him home to Julius, that senile old man, or to that alcoholic Ferdinand. Neither of them can deal with this. Let's take him to a decent hotel and get him cleaned up, get him sober, buy

him some clothes. Let's see if we can't get him back on his feet and then Julius can take over again "

And so the die was cast. They took him to the Crane Hotel on Powell Street near Geary, where my old nanny, Jo Stone, used to live as a pensioner. The desk clerk remembered my mother and they rented Egon a room. Rudy and Mother got him sobered up, washed, shaved and bought clean clothes for him. By then they were getting to know him. Not only did he look like Gus Tham but he had the Tham attitude too. All of the Thams in Austria had been taught as children that they were something special – just a little bit better than everyone else. Gus and Julius, the American immigrants, had lost most of that attitude and were just nice guys. But not this one. Not only was he a drunk, he was a drunk with attitude!

I wish I could say that the saga of Egon started miserably and ended well. Mother and many others put so much time and effort into this man, it would justify the recital of events to know that at the end it was all worth it. Getting him sober took some patience, medical help, counseling, food, clothes and .oh! Did I forget to say it? Money. But the reward was that after a few weeks he looked great. Tall, slim, fair coloring, in his early twenties. Not only did he look good, but he had a rather nice personality, though always tinged with that tone of arrogance. Mother was determined to get him a job now that he was presentable. By now he had told all the horror stories about the Communists in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, his home town.

He had some affection for his mother, Wilma Tham Mahdal, but only disdain for his father Josef. Wilma was the only child of Rudolph Tham, one of Gus Tham's older brothers. Egon was her only child and she spoiled him terribly. Josef Mahdahl, a staunch Catholic, tried to curtail the boy, and inflict some discipline, but Wilma wouldn't allow it. She and her mother Rosa, who lived with them, made it clear that the boy was special and not to be disciplined by Josef. So Josef slunk off to his Catholic Church whenever he could and prayed that everything would turn out all right.

By his own account, Egon was a noble, righteous, educated, freedom loving young man who was persecuted by oppressive Communists who held his country captive. When he defied their decree to work and stay sober, they threatened to send him to a labor camp along with his drinking pal, Milan Sikela. The two of them fled for their lives. They swam the river with bullets zinging over their heads.

Through Poland they made it to East Germany, but they had no papers and somehow had to get from East Germany, a Communist country, into West Germany. There they planned to throw themselves on the mercy of the Americans and beg for asylum. On a train heading west they were about to be identified by a Russian soldier moving down the aisle checking papers. A British

journalist sitting next to Egon saw what was happening and shoved him under the seat and threw his overcoat on top of him. The Brit then toughed it out with the soldier

Once they got to West Germany he and Milan went to the Voice of America, where Milan had a contact. Since Egon had the name of an uncle in San Francisco, he was sent on to the American Refugee Agency in West Berlin. Milan had no such contact so they gave him a job at Voice of America radio station until they could develop a sponsor for him in Canada or America. The Americans contacted Egon's uncle Julius Tham in San Francisco. The old man felt a surge of pride that he still had the opportunity to do something wonderful – something important – in his life. But then they found out he was 79 years old and said he had to find a co-sponsor who was gainfully employed

He thought about Poldi right away but he knew about her bad experience with Ferdinand and Paula Vrba so he decided against it. But that made him think of Ferdinand who still worked at Schlage Locks. Surely he would be willing to lend a hand to help a fellow countryman, especially one who was his former wife's nephew. Ferdinand was only slightly drunk on that Friday night when Julius called and he amiably agreed to whatever was asked of him. Within weeks Egon was on his way to San Francisco.

It only took one day with Julius and Harriet Tham, in their little home in the Sunset District for Egon to know that he was moving on. This home and their lifestyle were definitely beneath his expectations. The most alcohol he could find in the home was a couple of beers – and not even imported! What he wanted was Slivovitz – but he'd settle for anything with a good kick. He managed to scrounge some money from them before he left for downtown where he could find some booze. And that's where he stayed until Rudy and my mother found him

Lee was proud of the way he looked now. When he spoke of his experiences she swelled with pride at the attention he commanded. The Communist occupation of the eastern bloc in Europe was always a topic of interest here. She knew Gus Tham would be proud to see this handsome well dressed young man who so much resembled him.

Lee's Cadillac car dealer told her about his friend Alexander M. Poniatoff. He was a Russian who fled to America during the Russian Revolution. He worked for Dalmo Victor Company in San Carlos during World War II. In 1944, he founded his own company, Ampex, using his initials A.M.P. plus EX for excellence. He produced the first U.S. built magnetic audio tape recorder in 1948. It revolutionized the radio industry and was followed in 1956 by video tape recorders. Ampex was a stock market star in the early sixties and employment swelled to 13,000 by 1969. Mother heard that Poniatoff was particularly encouraging to immigrants who had fled from countries under communist control



She decided to take a chance and approach him with the newly reconditioned Egon.

Egon looked his best and they sat in Mr Poniatoff's waiting room, hoping for a meeting with him. They were allowed in and my mother told him about Egon coming from Czechoslovakia, hoping to find a job San Francisco. Then Egon told his escape story, which was by now a well honed tale. Swimming the river bullets whizzing over his head hiding under the British journalists overcoat. taking refuge at the Voice of America until finally a beloved relative in San Francisco vouched for him and he could realize his dream and come to America. Poniatoff bought it all and offered him a job on the spot. Ampex was booming and he knew they could find a place for him.

Mother was thrilled Mr Poniatoff was an acknowledged business leader and she found him to be a wonderful human being with compassion as well as business acumen. Ampex was a great company with an excellent future. Egon could go far with them. She found a place for him to live in Redwood City, bought food and essentials and set him up to live on his own. She felt a surge of joy at her success and knew this would be the beginning of great things for this young man who looked so much like her beloved stepfather, Gus Tham. She always felt grateful to Gus Tham for his faith in her. At last *this* was really her opportunity to repay him.

She kept in touch with Egon each day at first, not completely sure of him, but soon other interests in her life prevailed and she turned her attention to other things. Carl was running out of work and he needed someone to sell windows for him so Lee took that on. She bought a new Cadillac every two years in spite of Daddy's disapproval. By 1960, however, everyone had a love affair with the automobile and Mother was no exception. She never told him when she got a new car and always got navy blue so sometimes he didn't notice for a while, or at least pretended not to notice. He would always 'find out' when he did the taxes each January and it fueled their annual arguments. He told her that no one would buy windows from someone driving a big fancy car, but she drove around to Los Altos, Yountville, King City and Salinas and got a few small jobs for him.

At the same time she was spending more money on the buildings. Malcolm Plumbing put new copper pipes in Marina Court and soon after, Cornely Furnace put in a new boiler. Twenty-five of the thirty apartments were now completely renovated. There was no longer rent control so she pushed the rents up but she suffered anguish each year trying to decide how much to raise the rent. Kay Kelly, a retired school teacher lived in 3455-305, a beautiful one bedroom. She was raised from \$85 to \$90 one year and Lee anguished as she raised it to \$106.50 two years later because she couldn't keep it artificially low any longer. The Page and Lyon store was still rented at \$150 and the two flats above at \$75 each. By October 1958 her monthly income from real estate was \$3,775. Marina Court at \$2,600, Greenwich flats \$800; Page-Lyon building \$300 and the Fillmore

street flat above Carl's studio \$75. That didn't even include the new Union Hyde building they bought with Marge and Terry, which brought in \$1149 a month including the three stores. Searchlight Market paid \$379 50 a month, one small store paid \$52 and the other \$55. The apartments ranged from \$55 for a studio to \$85 for apartment #7, the best and largest one bedroom in the building

Dealing with tenants was becoming onerous and she was sure commercial spaces were easier to manage. The tenants at Marina Court were mostly single working women who commanded a certain level of propriety in their building. A handsome young Lebanese man living at Marina Court sometimes entertained his female guests by sharing his bathtub as they enjoyed a glass of wine. But he went too far when he invited *two* guests to join him. The tub overflowed and flooded the apartment below and the one below that. The lady below was a proper spinster and was more outraged at the mental image of the bawdy scene above her, than she was at the actual damage to her apartment! Mother told the young man the bad news. He would have to move. But the good news was that she now owned another building with huge oversized clawfoot tubs in a more Bohemian neighborhood – the Union Hyde Apartments on Russian Hill. It was a win-win situation.

Every morning Mother read the real estate ads, from one end to the other. Every day, month after month, she saw the same advertisement: "Stores For Sale-1909-1913-1915 Union Street" She knew they were in the right location, between Pacific Heights and the Marina District. But something had to be wrong with them. They never sold. They were listed week after week. Finally she called "Tiny" Small. "Tiny, I want you to find out about these stores. Why won't anyone buy them? What's wrong with them?" He drawled, "Huneke, let me look into it." He reported back that Union Street itself was run-down and the stores had a shoe repair shop in one and a massage parlor in the other. The third space, which had been divided off, was empty. However, they were all on month-to-month leases, paying a total of \$250 rent per month. My mother said to Tiny, "What kind of business would do well there?" "Well, you know, Huneke, I don't know. It should be a good neighborhood, but it's never done very well. Everyone goes to Chestnut Street in the Marina." Mother listened, but she had a feeling about this. She thought that the Page-Lyon neighborhood might lose value and was looking for a neighborhood that was going to improve. She thought this might be it. "Tiny, I want to buy that building, but I don't have any money. I'll have to sell the flats and store at Page and Lyon. Find out how much the Union Street stores cost and see if I can do it."

So "Tiny" Small put together a deal. The Union Street stores cost \$35,000. The Page-Lyon building, two flats and a store, would sell to Never Wong, for \$32,500. Mr. Wong already owned the grocery store business, and was happy to buy the building. There was only one detail that had to be worked out. Daddy

She moved ahead "Carli, I found a building on Union Street. They call the neighborhood Cow Hollow. It's a wonderful location between Pacific Heights and the Marina and it should be very good someday." So far, he stayed calm. At least there were no tenants to deal with. She went on, "One store is empty, one is a shoe repair shop and one is a massage parlor, but they can all be asked to move because they have no long term leases." Carl asked cautiously, "Who would move in there?" "I don't know yet, but I think the neighborhood is improving and we'll find good tenants." "And where will you find the money to buy it?" he asked quietly, not knowing what she would say. She explained that they would sell the Page-Lyon building to Never Wong, and all she would need was an additional \$2,500 cash to close the deal. Then he exploded worse than ever before. He shouted that Page-Lyon was a known entity, in an established neighborhood, with an excellent lessee and good tenants in the flats. Of course, Wong wanted the building for \$32,500. He knew a good deal when he saw one. And of course, she could get the Union Street stores for \$35,000. They were worthless. He said she had done some foolish things in the past, but this time she had gone too far. He had signed in the past, but this time he would not. He had finally gotten used to Page-Lyon. It was a good building and he would not allow her to make a foolish mistake. Period. The end. No more discussion. Mother proceeded with her plans, but Daddy remained adamant.

The final papers had to be signed by May 1, 1961. That gave Mother and "Tiny" one month to plan their strategy for the stores. "Tiny" asked, "Are you sure he'll sign?" "Of course he will. Don't worry about it." Immediately they started looking for a single tenant for the whole building. Large spaces were in demand. In 1960, the Winter Olympics were held in Squaw Valley near Lake Tahoe. Skiing became the new fad and all the young people with money were buying equipment. Don Cappa approached "Tiny" Small about renting the space. Don had no previous retail experience. He was an engineer with Shell Oil, but he was burned out on his job. He loved skiing and wanted to start a business that would profit from the new craze- winter sports. He could market his ideas: ski packages, including tours, equipment, rentals and sales. And just in case business was slow to start, he would sub-lease some space to a liquor store. The lease would be for \$350 per month for three years, starting in September, with a three-year option, at a price to be agreed upon. Mother agreed. She contacted Mr. Coudin, her general contractor, to do the necessary work starting immediately after close of escrow. The existing tenants were given notice to move. Daddy and Mother had not spoken for several weeks, but they were both so busy, he with stained glass windows and she with "the deal", that neither of them noticed. When it came time to sign, he did so, just to get the nuisance of it out of the way.

Early in May, Mother and Daddy were roused in the middle of the night by a hysterical phone call from Aunt Adele. She had just discovered Uncle Ernest dead in his bed. Later, she learned it was a heart attack. Their son, Warren was studying at the University of Vienna in Austria. Aunt Adele was alone and

frightened. My parents went over immediately, to help calm her and to make arrangements. Daddy and Ernest had not seen each other for many years, but Aunt Adele had always kept in touch with Mother and Daddy. More than once, Uncle Ernest had enjoyed being with my young boys, Timmy and Greg, when they were in San Francisco visiting. Soon the funeral arrangements were made, Warren came home and Ernest was laid to rest.

After the funeral Mother and Mr. Coudin plunged in to complete the structural work at the Union Street building before Don Cappa started his interior decorating in the store. In the back of the shops, there was a garden with a huge avocado tree, which bore delicious fruit. These were harvested and distributed to everyone in the nearby stores. Soon Mr. Coudin finished his work and Cappa started his remodeling that would create a landmark on Union Street. The exterior of the store had an alpine motif. The large window displays had good lighting so that the merchandise was visible day and night. He named it "Marina Sea and Ski". He announced a Grand Opening for September 1961. He promoted it well. Newspapers wrote about it. Herb Caen gave it a big spread. By the night of the event, it was the biggest thing that ever happened on Union Street. He hauled in truckloads of snow and dumped it in the middle of Union Street. The kids sledded down the hill. They built snowmen and threw snowballs.

At the time of the Grand Opening, Terry and I along with Timmy and Greg were staying with Mother and Daddy. Terry had been offered a wonderful job as an engineer at Ampex Corporation in Redwood City. We would be leaving Richland to move back to the Bay Area before Thanksgiving. My parents were jubilant; their arguments about this new building were forgotten.

We all went to Union Street that night. It was an event made for color television, a new technology in the city, and Don Cappa played up to it. Searchlights made the street bright as day. Every newspaper had photographers there. They heard the happy shouts of San Francisco children, playing in the snow. Now they were sledding, making a snowman and throwing snowballs. Rudy, Evelyn and two of their three children, Gus, 12 and Brad, 7, were there, along with Terry and me, Timmy, nearly 5, and Greg, 3 ½. Judy, 16, was away at school, at Dominican. The children tumbled about in the snow with all the others. Daddy played with them as they all laughed, threw snowballs and sledded down the hill. Loudspeakers played the new song, "I Left My Heart In San Francisco". I cried, grateful that we were moving home from Richland, Washington.

Following the opening, we went to our favorite restaurant, New Joe's in North Beach. We all were upbeat about the new building and thought the Marina Sea and Ski store just might be the right idea, at the right time. Daddy tried to relax about the new real estate investment they had made. He still thought Page-Lyon was a better building, and less of a risk. Maybe this new building would work out

after all. Better than anything else, he loved having his grandchildren all together in one place. Dinner became a celebration.

Within a year, it was clear that the mass exodus to the suburbs, following the war, did not include minorities, who were now trapped in the city. The Haight-Ashbury became a target for those who were under-employed, or on the fringes of society. Rather quickly, the fabric of that neighborhood, where the Page-Lyon grocery was located, deteriorated. At the same time Union Street improved, store by store, to become the upscale neighborhood shopping area for Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow and the Marina, three of the wealthiest neighborhoods in San Francisco. This time Mother had succeeded beyond even her own expectations.



Above: At Dominican, at a Luncheon Left, front to back; Vonnie Huneke, Adele Gade, Mother Right side Back to front, Evelyn, Marge, Judy and her friend.

Below: Celebrating New Year's at Bimbo's in San Francisco around 1956. From left, Mother, Rudy, Evelyn, Daddy, Elmer and Hilda.





Above: From Left; Judy, Rudy, Evelyn, Mother and Daddy. Rudy is sworn in as Fire Commissioner of San Francisco.

Below: Left; Mother, Rudy, Daddy and Henri Lewin. Celebrating the opening of "Henri's Room at the Top" at the Hilton. Daddy's faceted window made for Henri was featured.





Easter breakfast at Hilton Hotel. Mother Left, Egon Right, Gus Tham and Joe Dillon Jr. and Emma Dillon in background



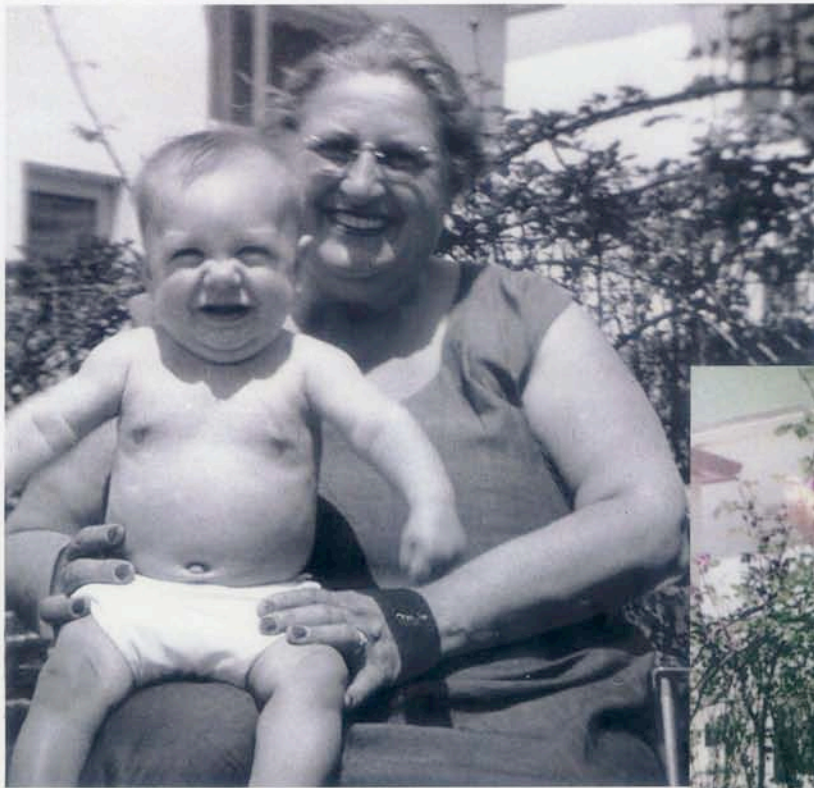
Upper left: Egon Mahdal after Mother and Rudy got him sober and cleaned up.

Middle right: Julius Tham, Gus Tham's brother, who brought Egon over from Bratislava.

Below: Egon, Debbie, his wife and Milan Sikela, his friend and fellow escapee from Czechoslovakia. At our house in Menlo Park.







Above left: Mother with Timmy at three months.

Below right: Mother with Timmy at about six months. Both in San Francisco in her back yard.



Left: Greg at six months in San Francisco.

Right: Greg at six weeks in Richland, Washington.

