

July 13, 1982

The idea of writing down our family history going as far back as I remember, was originated by Janet's wish that we talk to Jonah (Joe) on his visit to Denver in August 1976 as much as possible about his heritage from both sides of our families.

In order to find one's own identity one has to know one's background. I am one of the few of a large family from my father's and my mother's side who knows many details dating back 65 years and longer. As the only member of the family who has a son and a grandson there is reason enough to reconstruct the chain which leads to Steven and his son Jonah (Joe) Marx.

My grandfather from my father's side was Josef Gruenwald, born December 1, 1836. He, together with his wife Louise, nee Schweizer (I was named after her), produced innumerable children. Eight of them were living when I was born and I remember each one of them vividly. Each of the four aunts and four uncles had very outspoken personalities. Since Steven asked me to go into as much detail about all these aunts and uncles of mine, I am trying to sketch them as I remember them and describe how much they affected my personal life. The four brothers, Adolf - my father, Karl, Hugo and Julius as well as the four sisters of my father, Jenny, Ida, Anna and Sofie were very different from each other. Two of the brothers, Hugo and Julius emigrated to America at the end of the 19th century. Hugo became a pianist and piano teacher in New York at the time of Fritz Kreisler and Josef Hoffmann. He must have been a very good teacher. He married beautiful aunt Helen who gave him two daughters, one of them, Elsa, became the wife of Sam Leidesdorff in New York who was one of the most respected and well-known philanthropists. Elsa was not only beautiful but a very interesting looking woman, very eccentric, something she could afford due to her husband's social and financial position. Elsa was a warm and outgoing person, and I will never forget the dinner invitations to the Leidesdorff home on Park Ave. shortly after our arrival in the United States in 1937, waited on by butler and maid and visiting their beautiful country estate in Elberon, N.J. Elsa died of cancer at a rather early age and left two children who have lost all contact with the family. Sam L. died at age 80, having left millions to New York University and to Jewish Philanthropy. He was a self-made man, simple in his tastes considering



that he was the head of one of the most respected accounting firms in the U.S. The second daughter of Hugo was Gertrude Barrett. Her husband, a CPA worked for Leidesdorff up to his 95th year, walking to his office every day. Gertrude died in 1980 in New York. She had no children and left some money to her nieces and also to Steven, hardly knowing him.

Before I proceed with describing the other seven of the Gruenwalds, I want to give some more background of my grandfather Josef. He was born December 1, 1836 in Muehringen, a small town in the State of Wuerttemberg, South Germany where also my grandmother Louise was born. Muehringen was one of the numerous small towns which were predominantly Jewish, with their own synagogues, cemeteries and Jewish administration in matters of religious education. Josef was a goldsmith, a rather unusual profession for Jews at that time. Most of them were cattle dealers or peddlers. Since my father was the youngest of the 8 children, my grandfather was already an old man when I met him. He was retired and lived in a modest apartment in Stuttgart where one of his sisters kept house for him. My grandmother died of cancer before I was born, around 1907. Yette and Josef hated each other, still she performed her housekeeping duties until she could no longer function and lived out her days in the Jewish Old Age Home in Esslingen where we visited her once in a while. My grandfather was almost completely deaf but used one of the "trumpets" into which one had to shout, and I never knew if he heard what I was saying. He ate his Saturday meal at our house, appeared at Noon, sat down to eat, it was always the same menu. He would look over his gold rimmed glasses into the soup tureen to check if the soup was alright! Then he took out a silver-coin and gave it to me to put it into my kiddy-bank. On his 80th birthday I had to write a letter to him in my best penmanship and hand it over to him since he could not hear what I wanted to say. In those days an "80th Birthday" was an unusual event, so a big family celebration took place at his house. He lived to be 85 and coming to a stage where he felt that he had lived long enough and where his physical problems became too much for him and the other, he threw himself out of the wind<sup>ow</sup> to end it all. It was much later that I was told this story. He chose the time when my father, his son, was on his second honeymoon with his second wife, Paula, and it was a great blow for Adolf to return and hear the sad news. I have a small locket in which a picture of



grandfather and grandmother is enclosed. It was worn on the watch chain of the male in the family.

The more I reflect on the rest of the family members of that period I realize how difficult a task I have undertaken. They were a very diversified flock, each with very outspoken characteristics, partly lovable, partly anything but lovable. Julius, the second youngest brother was sent to America for the same reason as many other young men of good families were sent - they created problems at home and one shipped them off to America! Julius was a charmer but undertook financial transactions which were not quite in order. He worked for Leidesdorf as a bookkeeper, married Frieda Rosenfelder who was sent to America to "meet" him, they had to move to St. Louis in order to be away from the very respectable rest of the family! Only after Julius and Frieda retired and had satisfied brother Hugo that they would not embarrass the Leidesdorf family, were they invited to return to New York! There were no children out of this marriage, and they felt very close to us and Julius enjoyed playing with Steven in the playground, sliding down the slides and having great understanding for children. Julius died of stomach cancer in his eighties in NY, we visited him to the end in Doctor's Hospital. Frieda lived to age 95! She was a very conservative woman, immaculately dressed, but never lost her heavy German accent although she spoke English only. She left a small legacy to all nieces and nephews and also for Steven which paid for his car when he moved back to New York to start teaching at Columbia College in 1967.

My fondest recollections are of my uncle Karl and his wife Ella. They were the parents of Else Seyfert and Lotte Geismar. I considered them like surrogate parents; they lived in Stuttgart and my father and Karl were very close, although my father never divulged to brother Karl his financial status, and vice versa. Karl was the "Brauerei-Director" of one of the largest breweries in South Germany, "Stuttgarter Hofbraeu". He was a real bureaucrat, but a lovable man and more of a father-figure for me than my own father whom I respected but with whom I could not warm up to the extent I needed it at that time. Due to the difficult situation at a difficult age I was longing for maternal love and understanding of the situation with my stepmother, and I found it in Karl and Ella. My childhood spent in the Danneckerstrasse, with cousins Lotte and Else and the Grau family who lived next door form wonderful memories of these years of upheaval in my life.



In order to explain what difficult years lay behind me I have to insert a short "essay" of a day in my life which explains why I was longing for understanding. The date is September 5, 1919. It is the day before my ninth birthday. Father was on a business trip in Berlin. As usual in the morning I crawled into my mother's bed to snuggle up a little or play with her long dark hair, making braids and "just be with her". I knocked on her bedroom door and received no answer. I looked into the room, the bed was empty, and I did not know where she could be so early in the morning. The bathroom door was locked and no answer when I called out to her. I go out to the terrace which has a milk-glass window into the bathroom, and climbing up on a chair I saw the outline of a body in the tub... Nothing clear could be seen through the thick glass, but enough to give me the idea that something terrible had happened. Shortly after the maid came down from her room below the roof. Maids did not share the same floor with the people they worked for! She realized what had happened, she screams and calls people in the house and I was whisked away to some relatives. But I was able to call the telegram-office and sent a telegram to my father, saying "come back, mother had accident". - The table with my gifts for my birthday was set in the living-room, the children's party had to be cancelled. Father returned, took me in his arms and cried. I was never told what had happened, but learned it later through others. Why, of all days did it have to be the day before my birthday? It was the most traumatic experience which still haunts me after more than 60 years.

A strong bond existed between me and my father's sister Sofie Rosenfelder. She was married to my mother's brother Hugo, these are Alice Cramer's parents. It was the third marriage between the Rosenfelder and the Gruenwald family. Alice and Lewis were the children of Hugo and Sofie. Lewis (Ludwig) was several years older than his sister Alice who was one of the most beautiful children I can remember. We were not always as close as we are today. There was rivalry and fighting between us cousins, and we went through many difficult experiences since Sofie, Alice's mother, always found that I was the better one of the two, and made her daughter feel bad! As we grew up this has changed and we both feel very close to each other, since we are actually almost sisters considered the marriage of the parents from both families.



The oldest sister of my father lived in Speyer/Rhine. Nobody liked her theatrical mannerism and nobody liked to go to Speyer, although I stopped there once in a while on my way to Saarbruecken, where sister Ida and Anna lived. Saarbruecken brings back many fond memories of my childhood. It was a harmonious atmosphere and aunt Ida was involved in many organizational activities outside the home which gave her a wider horizon than the average housewife had at that time. Her marriage to Sally was a good one and the two daughters, Erna and Martha had a normal upbringing, working in the business of their father. It was a "General Merchandise Store", and I always enjoyed to visit with them and be part of the many things going on in such a business. It was the year 1919 when the revolution in Germany took place, and since my relatives lived in the center of town, I could watch many exciting events taking place on the "Rathausplatz". In the same apartment house one floor above lived sister Anna with her daughter Lise. Anna was a widow and was the bookkeeper in Sally's business. Lise was 9 years older than I was, and I was very fond of my older cousin with the same name. Shortly after the death of my mother Lise and Anna moved to Stuttgart to keep house for my father and me. It took 1½ years until Adolf decided to re-marry and they moved into the apartment where our grandfather Josef lived. After his death they remained in Stuttgart and became part of the clan, Lise supporting her mother all these years as Anna had no outside income, except what her brothers contributed voluntarily. Anna, Ida, Sally - his daughter Erna and her husband Ernst Peyser became victims of the holocaust and went to the extermination camps and nobody ever heard from them. - One of the miracles in this time of upheaval is that my father and Paula and their three children came out alive. We, Henry and I, emigrated to the U.S. in November 1937 and urged my father to get out of Germany, no matter what sacrifices he would have to make. The company for which he was working all his life had branches all over the world, he tried the U.S. but all positions were taken by the younger employees of the SAPT (name of company) and for him there was either Austria or Brazil to settle. He decided on Vienna! We warned him, seeing the handwriting on the wall from our vantage point, but to no avail. They sold their house in Stuttgart under duress, the year was 1938 and moved to Vienna! Hannelore was in England where many Jewish children were accepted by the Quakers. The rest of the family lived at the Hotel Metropole until "permanent"



quarters could be found! Meanwhile the German army invaded Austria and headquarters of the SS was established at the Hotel Metropole in Vienna! How they were able to drive out of Vienna, in their own German car, with two children and their few belongings, is recorded in a separate letter written by Adolf and Paula after their safe arrival in Switzerland. The letter is in our possession. After many negotiations with his company my father at last was offered a position<sup>in</sup> Sao Paulo - Brazil, and this brought the family to this distant land. It was not an easy decision, but the fact that a well-paid job and a house and maid were included, made them accept the offer. Father and Paula were never happy in their newly adopted country while the younger generation adjusted and prospered. After concluding the "Gruenwald-Saga" I feel obliged to mention the Rosenfelder family, my mother's brothers and sisters. It will be a bit confusing, but you wanted me to be as specific as possible. Nine brothers and sisters fortunately only <sup>four</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>seven</sup> ~~four~~ children, which will make it easier to bring you up to date.

My grandparents from my mother's side were Moritz and Fanny Rosenfelder, née Gutmann. They lived in Cannstatt, a suburb of Stuttgart with several mineral springs which was developed into a spa where people came to drink the waters. My mother was the second youngest of the children, she was born November 15, 1885. Her name was Mathilde, but everybody called her Thilde. It was customary to visit with the grandparents on Friday evening, and I remember my mother walking with me via the "Anlagen", a public park, to spend the Friday evening with her parents and her sister Thekla. Grandfather would return from the synagogue, Thekla served the meal and it was always exciting to be allowed to stay up late on that evening. This was during World War I, 1914-18. My father was not able to join, since he was in the military, although not at the front. He was allowed to visit his family once a week and brought delicious "Kommissbrot", something we city dwellers could not obtain during the strict rationing of food. I remember my grandmother celebrating her Golden Wedding Anniversary, she was already sick in bed, but was brought out to receive a medal from the King of Wuerttemberg on this rare occasion. One week later she died. My grandfather kept his apartment, his unmarried daughter Thekla took care of him, and he frequently came to visit us and let me ride on his knees.



As it was customary in the upper middle class I grew up with a "Kinderfraeulein" (governess) who was in full charge of me and my activities. Leni, a Danish citizen, was a wonderful person and deeply devoted to the family. She taught me the Danish national anthem which I still can remember! We stayed in contact for many years after she had returned to her native country. The housework was done by a maid and my mother mostly did the cooking herself, since my father was a very critical and demanding man who wanted his meals just the way he got them "at home". Food played a very important part in the Gruenwald family. It was discussed and compared and criticized a great deal, and no woman would accept today what a housewife took for granted in 1900. In 1916 I entered a private school, girls only. No school in Europe had co-education. I made many friends and many of these friendships lasted a long time. Many of these friends lost their lives in the Holocaust. The inflation of 1920, following the end of World War I wiped out almost everybody's savings. The D-Mark went from millions to billions without having any real value. Father had a well-paid position, <sup>but</sup> was forced to change me from private school to public school, since the tuition in private schools rose to enormous sums which he could not afford. I was happy in public school and my long-lasting friendships were formed among the girls with whom I spent my adolescence. I graduated from High School, went on to a home-economics class to learn cooking, sewing, kindergarden etc. and then the question arose what professional training should follow? My parents decided (for me) to send me to the Hoehere Handelsschule, a 2-year intensive schooling for office work or preparation for study of economics. After graduation in 14 different subjects I was ready to enter the adult world! Looking for a job in 1928 was not an easy task. Unemployment in Germany was high, political unrest was noticeable. My first position with a bookshop in Stuttgart was poorly paid but rewarding in other aspects. I was free to go out with young men, pay my own wardrobe and become a more independent person. I was longing to get away from the small-town atmosphere of Stuttgart, and after having gained more experience in larger offices I was able to obtain a position in Berlin, partly through the good offices of my father who had connections all over. Henry had left Stuttgart for personal reasons and found a job in Berlin. The natural thing for Lise was to follow him! The year was 1933. I had hardly started my secretarial work at one of the



large utility-companies in the center of Berlin <sup>when</sup> ~~that~~ the Reichstag (Parliament) caught fire, it was April 1, 1933. From this moment on all Jews were dismissed from positions of importance, the Nazi movement had complete lists of each Jewish employee of large companies, and Lise together with hundreds of thousands of Jewish employees lost her job. On the same day we received the sad news that my cousin Fritz Rosenfelder in Cannstatt had shot himself. He could not face the fact that his beloved German Athletic Club would not consider him a member any longer. It was a great shock to all of us, above all to his widowed mother. He had been the head of a successful business, and was beloved by all his friends and relatives.

Despite all these difficulties Henry was still able to obtain a position which looked rather promising. It was a Jewish concern in Berlin and it offered him an income on which we dared to get married. The year was 1934 - everybody thought "it will blow over soon". We had a small but beautiful wedding-ceremony in the synagogue in Stuttgart, attended by friends and family, and a dinner at my father's house. A 3-week honeymoon to Switzerland and Italy made us forget that clouds were on the horizon. We moved into a furnished apartment in Berlin, bought after one year our own furniture, Henry was successful in his new position, travelled frequently to Holland, England, Sweden and was able to save a little of his expense-account and leave it outside Germany ... just in case. At last in 1937 we realized that the time had come to leave our native country. We received the affidavit to enter the U.S. from a cousin of my mother, a man whom we had never met before, but who devoted his life to help anyone who asked for help to emigrate. Packing our belongings and transporting our furniture to the U.S. was done by a moving-firm, and everything arrived in good shape at our new domicile. We brought no money, but we were healthy and eager to start a new life. The rest is ancient history. Henry was able to obtain a job the day after our arrival in the U.S. at \$15.00 per week, improved the situation by changing to another position with a firm who knew him from his first visit to the U.S. as an 18-year old young man and hired him at \$18.00 per week. He stayed with this company for several years, until the outbreak of World War II forced him to make a complete change and go into war-work. Steven was born in July 1942 at a time when America was involved in fighting Hitler in Europe. It was not easy to support our little family on the small wages he made, but we managed.



One year after our arrival in NY we received a letter from Elise urging us to send her affidavit to come to the U.S. She had been warned in Germany that an "action" against the Jews was planned and that she should leave the country as soon as possible to save her life. With the help of a relative of mother and our own limited resources we were able to file papers in her behalf and she arrived in September 1938 and lived with us for five years. These were not easy years, 3 generations in one apartment but circumstances dictated that there was no other way. We at last decided in 1944 to separate and take a smaller apartment on Arden St. and mother moved in with the Goldschmidt family. It was a heartbreaking decision for all of us, but we felt it had to be. At last we were alone - had our child alone, but when needed Grandma would help out ~~out~~ or baby-sit. We were forced to remain seven years on Arden Street since during the war no apartments were available. We made the best of a difficult situation until the time <sup>when</sup> ~~that~~ we moved to Riverdale in 1950 and Steven at last had a room of his own. Netherland Gardens was a brand-new apartment complex and the adjustment to a suburban neighborhood in which we hardly knew anybody was not easy. Steven started 3rd grade in PS 81, he was an excellent student and felt often bored with the reading assignment given in this school. After the 6th grade he was transferred to P.S. 7, a "special progress class" which saved him one year of Junior High School. Little by little we all got accustomed to the new neighborhood, we joined the Conservative Synagogue and found our niche in many other organizations. We lived in Riverdale for 27 years, Steven moved away from home, attended Columbia College, moved to California, met Janet at Stanford University and got married to her in April 1967. Together they returned East and lived in NY while Steven was an instructor at Columbia College and Janet was teaching at a private school. With the arrival of the Vietnam War things changed radically all over this country. Our family moved to British Columbia and bought a 100-year old farm and started a family of their own. Joe was on his way! In 1972 Henry was 65 years old and decided to retire. We spent 3 months in Europe, not sure if we would want to return or spend the next years in the Old World. We decided though that we belong to the U.S. and returned home. In 1973 we gave up our apartment in NY and stored our belongings. Driving West we felt that we wanted to make a complete change and after arriving in Denver and investigating the territory and enjoying it's <sup>mountainous</sup> ~~surrounding~~, we made a new start and settled once more in a new surrounding. Here we are for over nine years - not sure if this was the last move.