

## FORWARD

In preparation for the 2006 reunion at Brennhausen of the descendants of Wolfgang and Franziska von Bibra, Carl and I thought it might be helpful to assemble some family history in English. Carl has done the heavy work of preparing family trees and establishing a web-page –[www.vonbibra.net](http://www.vonbibra.net)–where he has posted pictures and short descriptions of people and castles in the Bibra family.

So where did we come from? The Bibras are an ancient Franconian family. Some of the Franks moved up the Rhein and Main Rivers from the Lowlands around 500 A.D. replacing the Celts. Others settled in what is now France. Unlike the other tribes moving from east to west, the Franks kept contact with each other and built a kingdom under the Merovingian kings and finally the empire of Charlemagne. After Charlemagne died, his three grandsons divided the empire into what has become France, Germany and middle kingdom between the two. The ancient duchy of East Franconia is the area of present day northern Bavaria.

Bibra is an old spelling of *Biber* or beaver. Our coat of arms is a black beaver on a golden shield. The term “*von*” or “*de*” means of or from. Place names came into general use for knights and nobles around the 1100's. Occupation names like Smith, Baker, Weaver came into general use later. While it is possible for the Bibra family to have given our name to the village or town Bibra near Meinigen, I think it is more probable that we got our name from the village because it is situated next to the Bibra *Fluss* (Beaver stream or river). There are two other villages in Eastern Germany named Bibra which are not related to us.

In the same way there are two schools of thought on the origin of the name *Brennhausen*

1) Houses of Springs: Josef Braun explains the name Brennhausen in his place-names book as the houses by a water source, meaning, in this case, a spring. Braun bases his statement on the fact that immediately next to the settlement a stream springs forth which flows into the river Saale. Braun discovered that the form Brenn- is a written form, changed from the spoken dialect, which is based on the old form Brünn. 2) Dr. Heinrich Wagner presents a very different view in his Historischen Atlas von Neustadt/Saale (Historical Atlas of Neustadt/Saale). Wagner believes that the origination of the name had nothing to do with the houses by a water source, but rather that the name of the estate is derived from the old German given name, Brunicho. Under this scenario, the founder of Brennhausen used his own name, as was the custom of that time, for the naming of Brunechenhusen.

. My personal opinion is that it was more likely “*Brunnhusen*” or house of the springs as it was called in most of the 1400's when the Truchsess family living there were referred to as the family Truchsess von **Brunhusen**. Maps of the Saal River show three streams coming together to form the river. One comes from a spring in the fields east of Alsleben; the second comes from a spring in the forest between Oberesfeld and Sulzdorf, and the third comes from the five springs at Brennhausen. Of course, people were not very good spellers back then.

The title *Freiherr* or literally “free lord” was bestowed on the various lines of the family in the late 1700's and early 1800's. With the end of the monarchy after World War 1, the title was made part

of the family name in Germany, but prohibited in Austria. In speaking Germans use the French *Baron* or *Herr Baron*. Also at the end of World War I, fiefs like Brennhausen were changed to private property subject to the taxation and inheritance laws like all other private property. In the centuries before the Bibras became barons the Bibras were hereditary Imperial Knights even though not every male Bibra became a knight. A fief in feudal times was a way rulers paid their vassal by leasing or giving them the use of one of the properties they owned instead of paying them money for their loyalty and services when called to arms.

While there has been a lot written about the family in German, there has been almost nothing in English until Graeme von Bibra teamed up with his cousin Lois Nynan to write in 1996 ***THE VON BIBRA STORY*** about the Bibra family in Australia. (ISBN0-95971887-8). Graeme has given us permission to copy parts of it to include in this handout for our Brennhausen reunion.

The main sources in German are the four volumes of the History of the Family of the Freiherrn von Bibra (*Geschichte der Familie der Freiherrn von Bibra*) by Wilhelm von Bibra 1870 and further volumes in 1880, 1882, and 1888 (*Beiträge zur Familien Geschichte der Reichsfreiherrn von Bibra* vol. 1-3). In 1994 Reichsfreiheit und Fürstendienst die Dienstbeziehungen der Bibra 1500 bis 1806 or really how the Bibras obtained positions with the state for themselves and their sons was written as his doctoral dissertation by Martin Stingl. In 1998 a book *Die Bibras* by Werner Wagenhöfer was published. Wagenhöfer's book is about the Bibras in the late Middle Ages.

What follows is an attempt to start writing down some of the oral history we have heard about our ancestors, particularly Wolf and Franzi, their children and about our ancestral home, Brennhausen. Our hope is that we can all share some of the stories our parents and grandparents have told us to add to bringing our family more up to date. Carl and I are also including some very short biographies of some interesting Bibras who were not our direct ancestors..

### **(P.39 - In the beginning)**

According to Wagenhofer (p.33) it was in the mid 1100's (12<sup>th</sup> century) that nobels first used the place they were from (von) as a family name.

As mentioned in the Forward, we do not know when the family first resided in Bibra near Meinigen, Germany. There was a Rupertas Biber mentioned in a document in 1119 AD and a Pertholdus de Bybera and his sons Portholdus and Tagino are mentioned in another document in 1151, but no documentation has survived about the in between generations to indicate whether or not they are direct ancestors.

The family tree is complete from the Bertholdus de Bibera who with his family was a party to a deed in 1245 transferring some land from Bibra to the Cloister Rohr.

It was his great grandson Berthold von Bibra who was buried at Rohr in 1389 who had acquired Irmelshausen as a fief from the Prince Bishop of Wurzburg in 1376.

Berthhold's great great grandson Jorg or George was the lord of Irmelshausen during the Peasant Rebellion (Bauernkrieg) in 1525 when almost every other castle in the area was sacked and burned except Irmelshausen. George negotiated a diplomatic solution with the peasants and saved Irmelshausen from plunder. His cousin Conrad von Bibra was one of the successful defenders of the Marienburg at Wurzburg with Sebastian Rotenhan and later served as Prinsce Bishop in 1540-44.

Bibra, Burgwallbach, Bundorf and Brennhausen were captured and burned. George had two wives. The first was Anna von Haun (died 1529). Mother of Hans and three daughters. One daughter married Johann Truchsess von Wetzhausen. His second wife Anna von Hutten gave him five more daughters for a total of eight!

#### (P.40)

Hans “the Elder” was born around 1515 at Irmelshausen and died there in 1581. He was the first Bibra to become a Lutheran which did not make him popular with the Prince Bishops of Wurzburg as he converted both Irmelshausen and Hochheim to protestantism.

Rather than entering government service, he lived his life at Irmelshausen building the southern or backside of Irmelshausen in 1550-1561, the Irmelshausen Church in 1575. His sister and her husband Johann Truchsess rebuilt the castle at Bundorf in 1546 after the Bauernkrieg. In 1558 Hans married Eva Cecilio von Marschalk-Orthiem and had two sons. The elder Valentine became the ancestor of the Adelsdorf, Gleicheriwiesen, Rossrieth and of Schwebheim lines of the family. Valentine died in 1595 at Kaschau, then in Hungary now Slovakia, fighting the Turks.

The younger son Bernhard married Sibylla von Witzleben in 1585 and followed his father in rebuilding destroyed family properties and the church at Aubstadt. He is the Stammvoter of the family lines of Brennhausen, Bibra, and Irmelshausen. His sons were Hans Caspar Sr. 1580, Hans Erhard, and Hans Christof (b.1602). Hans Caspar Sr. was father of Hans Caspar Jr. who was the father of Ludwig Ernst (1694-1740) who moved to Brennhausen and started our line and the current line at Bibra.

### **Brennhausen**

Our ancestral home, Brennhausen, was received in 1681 in settlement of a lawsuit which had lasted three quarters of a century.

The first Bibra to live at Brennhausen was **Ludwig Ernst** who moved there and married his housekeeper, **Katharine Seifert** on October 22, 1734. She was the daughter of a linen weaver and a midwife in Rentwerthausen

which is a village next to Bibra. The 1870 Bibra history states that she was born at Brennhausen which seems in conflict with Stingl saying her parents lived in Rentwerthausen.

In 1736 they had a son, **Friedrich Gotthelf** and in 1739 a second son, **Karl**. On February 8, 1740 Katherine was raised to the nobility by Emperor Carl VI and given the name *von Seyferhold*. Only five months later Ludwig Ernst died and his cousin at Bibra, Johann Philip seized Brennhausen by force and dispossessed the widow and her two children.

She appealed to the Imperial Court and twelve years later in 1752 she won an order from the court that Johann Philip must return the property to her sons and pay damages. The brothers later divided their properties with the older having Brennhausen and the younger having H6chheim. In 1772 both men received the hereditary title of *Reichsfreiherrn* (baron).

In 1805 justice was done when the son of Johann Philip died without having a son. The castle



and lands at Bibra were assigned to Carl Friedrich the son of the Carl whom Johann Philip had claimed was unfit to inherit Brennhausen!

### **Philip Carl (1764 - 1817)**

**Philip Carl** was one of two son of **Friedrich Gotthelf** (1736 - 1813). The other son died without children. Both men were military officers. Philip Carl was born September 8, 1764 and died August 10, 1817 in Trappstadt. He seemed to live beyond his means and had to sell his interest in various properties to his cousins. Finally in 1811 he agreed to sell Brennhausen itself to his first cousin Carl Friedrich, but failed to obtain the concurrence of the Fief Office which then gave his sons the grounds to stop the sale.

### **Friedrich Ludwig (1789 - 1827)**

Friedrich Ludwig was born June 29, 1789 and entered military service at the age of sixteen. This was at the time when Napoleon was marching through Europe and seemed unstoppable. He proclaimed the Kingdom of Bavaria and elevated the Wittelsbach Duke of Bavaria to King of Bavaria in order to obtain his military support for the campaign into Russia. The Duchy of Franconia was given to this new Kingdom of Bavaria. As a consequence, Friedrich Ludwig who served in the Franconian military was sent on Napoleon's Russian campaign. On the way, he was quartered with a family in Galicia (now part of Poland). Later as Napoleon retreated after losing three fourths of his army in a very severe winter, Friedrich Ludwig staggered back to the same family where the daughter Antonia helped nurse his wounds. They were married on April 20, 1814 in Solotweina, Galicia. The *de Brasson* family were Hugenots originally from France who had fled there during earlier persecutions of Protestants. They were involved in weaving.



*Friedrich Ludwig*

After he resigned his commission on March 3, 1814, they returned to Brennhausen and found it emptied out. (Leonie said that local people assumed that the young baron had been killed and was not coming back, so they took whatever they could from inside.) Their first son Carl Ernst Eugen was born May 10, 1814 in Konigshofen. Their second son Ludwig Gustav was born in 1823. His son Karl Maximilian died childless. Friedrich Ludwig died July 7, 1827 at the age of 38. Antonia died at the age of 71 on July 16, 1863.

### **Carl Ernst Eugen (1814 - 1888)**

**Carl Ernst Eugen** became a military officer and commanded the artillery at the Marienberg fortress overlooking Würzburg. According to Leonie he was playing cards every night at a spa with three other gentlemen. One night they needed a replacement for one of them. **George August Sartorius von Waltershausen** suggested that his daughter Caroline could fill in. She beat all of them. Her grandfather had been a professor at Göttingen



*Carl Ernst Eugen*

University. The Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria was his student and when he became King Ludwig I gave him the title George Sartorius Freiherr von Waltershausen and gave him Schloss Waltershausen as a fief.

He retired from the army and married **Caroline**, or **Lilly** as she was called, on July 17, 1861 at Waltershausen. He was 49 and she was 26. They moved into Brennhausen. Carl Ernst Eugen loved to hunt and she loved to play canasta. We don't know too much about Caroline. We can only surmise that she was a good amateur musician because of all the musical scores with her name on them. She possessed a rather large library of sheet music, some of it in original printing. We have also found some original compositions dedicated to her—one signed by the Musical Director of Bayreuth. Their three children were all named for animals Wolfgang, Eberhard (wild boar) and Leonie (lioness). They lived in Bamberg during the school months while the children were school age. (It was there that the family became close friends of General von Asch's family. Terry's wife was named after her great grandmother Olga von Asch Schraudenbach.

Our last common ancestor Wolfgang was born at Brennhausen June 7, 1835 and died in Jersey City on December 14, 1922. He married Francizka Penz in Innsbruck, Austria on November 11, 1884. She was born September 23, 1868 and died in Los Angeles January 26, 1934. When they wed, he was 22 and she was 15.

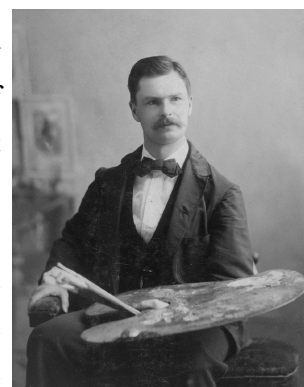
#### **Wolfgang (1862 + 1922) and Francizka (1868-1934)**

I did not personally know my **Grossvater** because he died in 1922. **Grossmutter** died in 1934 when I was just four years old. All I personally remember of her was of visiting her at the little house on Mosher Avenue off of Avenue 43 of the Pasadena Freeway which Dad had built for her. But what I do remember was not her but the rabbit hutches in her back yard. I guess four year old boys relate better to rabbits than to people.

In 1956 Pat and I went to Germany to get acquainted with my German roots and relatives. I had last been there as a child in 1937. We took an apartment in Munich and spent many hours with **Tante Leonie** who lived in an *Altersheim*. We took many short outings into the countryside for tea during the year we were there. During one of our first outings, Tante Leonie started talking about my grandparents. She remarked that I was intelligent enough to know that Germany sent their criminals to Australia and America, but the her brother Wolf was NOT a criminal.

She then related how Wolf had been a high spirited boy and her favorite brother and about Wolf riding his horse up the steps of Brennhausen and into the house. His father had not been amused. In order to give the children a better education, the family lived in Bamberg during their high school years. **Eberhard** reportedly was thrown out of school and the parents were finally told that he was only fitted for *Landwirtschaft* (farming). Wolf was often sent home for drawing pictures under his desk and would be happy whistling away. **Leonie** loved to have long discussions with Wolf, but Eberhard complained that he was left out. As a boy Wolf loved animals, especially horses. He was a good shot and loved to hunt.

Wolf, as told by Leonie, wanted to be in the *Totenkopf Hussar* (skull and crossbone cavalry)



*Wolfgang*

or at sea. His father vetoed the first; his mother the second. A cousin from the Bibra-Gleicherwiesen line was a Fieldmarshall of Austria and had asked repeatedly to be allowed to take Wolf. Finally, he was sent to Austria, introduced to Kaiser Franz Joseph and was well received. He was enrolled in the cadet school and later in officer school. He was good at drawing, but poor in composition. When the ten day exams came, he accepted an invitation to a hunting party instead. The superintendent informed his mother who told the Field Marshall cousin who then told the Kaiser. The Kaiser sent a telegram stating that the exams should then be given to Wolf. Wolf failed. So the Kaiser asked that the papers be sent to him; when he looked them over, he said that Wolf had given excellent answers and instructed that he be examined again and passed.

As a *Totenkopf Hussar*, he was helped several times by his cousin and the Kaiser. His father and the cousin had arranged an engagement between him and a wealthy Hungarian countess who would inherit four million. Sometime in the fall of 1884, Wolf was assigned as an aide to accompany Crown Prince Rudolf to Innsbruck.. While attending a ball, Wolf looked up at the balcony where onlookers were observing and spotted a beautiful young girl with blond hair down to her waist. He went up to introduce himself and took her home. Two weeks later he married Franziska Penz, a young girl of fifteen. Her stepfather was a postal clerk.

Wolf was told that he would have to transfer to a different regiment because his bride was not of noble birth and therefore not socially acceptable to the other officers wives. When the Bibra cousins learned about the marriage, they said they could not help. The Kaiser said he could transfer to the infantry, but Wolf said if not the *Hussars*, then nothing. He resigned.

Wolf wrote home asking for money, but his letters were not answered. Repeated letters were returned unread until finally Wolf sent a telegram. This time the telegram was read because the postman said this was different because their son and his wife were coming at 4o'clock and it was then 12 o'clock.

Leonie was home for vacation having received word of Wolf's marriage shortly before. She was sent to Walterhausen. When Wolf arrived, his father Carl Ernest was furious. Not only had he not married the aristocratic lady his father had engaged him to but married a girl with neither rank nor money. How was he to explain this to the Hungarian family? He took his gun and told Wolf to get out. (Here the story became interesting because I had heard it before in two different versions. Which would Leonie say?) Leonie said he did pull the trigger, but missed Wolf on purpose because he never missed. His mother Caroline (Lilly) quickly gave him her money and said he should go to America because it does not matter whom you marry there. Wolf left and Lilly hid Franzi in one of the ground floor rooms until her husband cooled off. Later her husband asked why the doctor came by. When he was told that it was because Franzi was expecting a child, the father **Carl Ernst Eugen** said she should have dinner upstairs. When it was prepared, Franzi arrived trembling, but in full beauty. She dropped her handkerchief; Carl picked it up and the day was won. He never said a word against her. Franzi moved upstairs. Malou was born on August 22, 1884. Only when it came time to baptize the baby, did he express disappointment that the baby was not a boy and stopped asking about her. But **Malou** at twelve months of age toddled in and pulled on his knee and won him over.

There was no word from Wolf for many months. Carl Ernst Eugen settled with the Kaiser and

the Hungarian Count. Finally word came from New York. During his time alone in New York Wolf had to learn a new language as well as finding a way to support himself and his family. He had no job skills other than being a country gentleman and a soldier. The one skill he did have was his hobby of painting.

When Malou was three years old, Wolf sailed with a friend named Taylor whom he had met. They landed in London where his intention had been to stay one day before continuing his journey, but instead stayed three days. Arriving at Brennhausen eager to see his father, he was told the sad news that **Carl Eugen** had been buried the day before on April 26, 1888.. From the number of paintings and sketches of Brennhausen dated 1888, he must have stayed a few months. He could have stayed in Germany but in the end he said he preferred freedom in America and took **Franzi** and **Malou** to America.

*(Leonie was a wonderful and dramatic story teller. We wish we had taped her narratives. How much of this particular tale was true and how much was embellished we will never know. However, we do know that she shortened the time line for dramatic effect. When she told the same story to someone else a few months later, she said that Wolf stayed in England with his friend for a fortnight (two weeks) and arrived at Brennhausen a week or so after his father's funeral instead of one day after.)*

Wolf's mother **Caroline** or **Lilly** as she was called continued to live at Brennhausen until her death in 1915. His younger brother **Eberhard** married Charlotte Lastig in November of 1888. They lived in Stolp, Prussia where Eberhard had a wholesale grocery business. After her death in 1920, he retired back to Brennhausen and in May, 1921 married Countess **Josephine** von Norman who had been a student of Tante Leonie's at her school in Dresden. During the end of his life Eberhard's eyesight was failing and he died May 5, 1940. Tante Josephine loved her life at Brennhausen and continued to live there until her death in November 11, 1961.

On August 22, 1885 Marie-Louise (Malou) was born in Brennhausen. What a time Franzi would have raising Malou for another two and half years at her parent-in-laws while Wolf was in New York learning a new language and without any job skills other than being a country gentleman or a soldier. The one skill he did have was his hobby of painting. It was 1888 before he was able to return. On the ship he had become acquainted with an English couple whom he visited for a fortnight before going on to Germany. He arrived to find that only a week or so before his father had died on April 26, 1888!

### **Wolf and Franzi in America**

Wolf took his family back to New York in 1888 where they lived in Jersey City and later in Hoboken, New Jersey while he had a studio in Manhattan. Life in America was not easy. They both had to learn a new language, new customs and survive with very little money. Wolf tried to support his family with his paintings of animals, landscapes and people. As Leonie explained, Wolf was a good painter and friend, but a poor provider. Fortunately he also did restoration work in churches which provided their main sustenance.



Among the clients he listed as references were the following: St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church in Jersey City Heights; St. Joseph Rectory in Hoboken; another St. Nicholas Church in Brooklyn; He decorated statues in St. Patrick's Rectory in Brooklyn and St. Leonard's Rectory in New York. He also did the official portrait of Mayor Hoos in Jersey City. He did work for the Catholic Supply Company and the Loyal Club in Manhattan. Among his advertisements is one announcing his ability to paint glass as an inexpensive substitute for stained glass windows.

One story Leonie told involved a good painting of the Sahara desert for which he was offered \$1000 by the Metropolitan Museum. He refused the offer, asking for \$2000 instead which was refused. Later a man commissioned a portrait for \$50 and two sittings. (Leonie wanted to say \$500.) After the first sitting, Wolf completed the painting. When the man came back he was very pleased. He saw the Sahara painting and asked how much he wanted for it. Wolf's reply was "Take it as a gift". Apparently this was not unusual for him. When someone really appreciated one of his finer paintings, often he would generously give it to them. Franzi was beside herself needing money for clothes for the children and new upholstery for the sofa, etc. They had six more children in nine years but only two survived. In 1889 Maria Anna (Anne) was born. Then Anna Wilhelmine in 1891 and Leonie Caroline in 1892. But they both died during the diphtheria epidemic. Then came their first son Carl in August 1894. He died the next day. Losing three children in one year was a heartbreak for Wolf and Franzi. Leonie said the spirit went out of Wolf and he was never the same again. Fortunately Malou and Anne survived. Then Lila Agnes was born in 1896 but survived only ten months. Finally on August 8, 1897 a second son, Carl Johann was born



The three children grew up in Jersey City across the Hudson from New York City. Malou married Professor Karl Bauer whom she had met at Elmhurst College through her cousin Theodore von Waltershausen who had also emigrated. Anne married Edmund Sutton of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Carl began his studies at Rutgers University, but heard about a new university in California that had such a rich endowment that there was almost no tuition. So he went west to enroll at the new Stanford University where he met another chemistry student, Edith Thompson, whom he later married in 1923.

### **Leonie Marie Louise Mathilda Elise (1867 - 1968)**

Leonie was born at Brennhausen on May 23, 1867. She spent her twenties studying painting in Florence, Italy with an Italian master named Salvetti. She became quite close to the family during the time she lived with them and spoke very fondly of the children. She gave up her painting education when according to her, she realized that she would never be a great original painter. She

could do credible copies, but unless she felt that her talent would produce great art, she did not want to pursue it. While living in Italy, she met the love of her life, one of Italy's leading poets –Giosuè Carducci. She never married.

Leonie also spent some years in the United States visiting Wolf and his family. During this time in America, she worked as a governess for the children of a German family in St. Louis, Missouri. Apparently she became very close to the family because when she left their employ, they gave her a beautiful gold necklace which was a family heirloom.



Probably the most important experience of her time in America was a year or two of teaching at Mt. Holyoke College. She taught, French, Italian and German. She was so impressed that the young ladies were getting a real education that she resolved to establish a school in Germany. We don't know how she financed her endeavor or why she established it in Dresden. Somehow she must have managed quite a sum of money because the house she bought was quite large and grand. She advertised the school throughout Europe and called it a finishing school for young ladies. Her students came from all over and she maintained a life long contact with many of them.

She was determined that the girls would learn something besides household and entertaining skills. She arranged for lectures on political affairs, economics, history, geography and science as well as art and music. We found a box of wood samples all neatly arranged. Apparently the girls were to learn to identify different trees by the grain of the wood. According to the students she was a real taskmaster. One famous story is her insistence on good table manners. Occasionally a raw egg was put in the arm pit of girls to teach them how to eat with their arms close to their side. Quite a feat! No doubt she was much beloved because during all those years, many of her students kept a close contact. On both her 90<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays there were former students present, by then old ladies. She closed the school in 1932 when she reached her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. She still lived in Dresden when Carl and his family visited her in 1937.

During World War II she was living in Munich, but when her apartment was destroyed in a bombing raid, she moved in with Renata Schraudenbach in Schloss Asch in Moosburg, not too far from Munich.

When Pat, Brenn and I came to Europe in 1956 she was living in an Altersheim on Dall'Armi Strasse 46 across from the Nymphenburg palace. Even though she was nearly blind from cataracts, she took brisk walks everyday along with her white cane. She was also deaf, but able to hear with a very large, old fashioned hearing aid. She was very petite and stood very straight. Every morning she rubbed her whole body with a rough towel and brush, a procedure she highly recommended for longevity. She was so animated and enthusiastic that being with her was always fun and stimulating. On May 23, 1967, we attended her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party where she was the life of the party reveling in all the telegrams from national and local political figures and her many friends. She died the following spring.

### **Maria-Luise Caroline Leonie (Malou) (1885-1960)**

According to Eugen, Malou met her future husband while visiting her cousin Theodore von Waltershausen who lived in Bensenville, Illinois next to where the O'Hare airport in Chicago now exists. Theodore and his wife Theresa were also what the Germans would call a "misalliance" and had also emigrated to America. During Malou's visit, they introduced her to Professor Karl Bauer who had come from Crailsheim, Germany when offered a free education in return for his becoming a Lutheran minister. He had attended a seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota and was now a professor at nearby Elmhurst College. He was a brilliant linguist, speaking seven languages, but lacked interest in the more practical necessities of life.

They married and had five boys: Otto 1906-1970; Karl 1907 - 1985; Hugo 1910-1991; Eugen 1915--; Franz 1917 - 1981 from which their children and grandchildren have multiplied. See that family tree.

### **Maria-Anna (Annie) (1889-1937)**

Annie was born in 1889 and somehow along with Malou survived the diphtheria epidemic of 1894. During a visit to Colorado Springs she met Edmund Sutton who became her husband in 1910. He was with the First National Bank in Colorado Springs. She taught languages at Colorado College for many years. They were divorced in 1929. They had four children: Jane 1911- 2006; Leonard 1914- 2002; Robert 1918-1996; and Alice Anne.



### **Carl Johann Eberhart Hubert (1897- 1963)**



Carl was born in Jersey City after the diphtheria epidemic.

After two years studying at Rutgers University, he transferred to the new and then inexpensive Stanford University to major in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. It was there he met his future wife, Edith Thompson, also a chemistry major. They were married in 1923. His activities were a blend of business and technical work. He wrote many technical and scientific articles and founded Exeter Oil, but also had a variety of different business interests. He and Edith had three children: Adele 1924-1989; Edith Huberta 1928-1998 and Conrad 1929.

### **(P.29-My Other Grandparents)**

The grandparents I knew were **Percy and Charlott Thompson**. Percy's parents, Eldrige Gerry Crosby Thompson and Martha Rawcliff Thompson, started in New England. The Thompsons were originally low land Scotts associated with the Campbell of Argyle Clan. The Rawcliffs were English from Yorkshire. He was an adventurer who was constantly trading one thing for another. They decided to go west over the Oregon Trail finally settling down in Grass Valley, California. Then the Alaskan Gold Rush attracted him and he was off to Alaska a couple or years leaving Martha behind. He did not strike it rich.



Percy went to college at Redlands, a Babist college where he met Charlotte Van Webber and studied Latin and Greek. They married and he went to work for the Oro Grande Lime and Cement Co. at Colton, California where my mother, Edith Rawcliff Thompson was born in 1896 and later her brother, Vernon P. Thompson.

Percy started driving mule team wagons. He told me mules were very smart - smarter than most people. Later with the early automobile he would drive over the original ridge route to Bakersfield to their customers in the San Joaquin Valley. He ended as general manager in Los Angeles. Apparently he kept on learning all his life. We have books he bought on railroad engineering and we still have his drafting instruments.

**(P.30)** Percy had a sense of humor and loved to tease Charlotte. He would tell me on the side “lets see if we can get a rise out of Grandmother”. Then he would tease her with a joke. She would always take the bait ending with “Oh, Percy!”

Charlotte was a strong woman herself with good taste and buying only the best quality. She loved to entertain the whole family for Thanksgiving and Christmas at their home or in summer at their simple cabin at Horseshoe Bend at the Rim of the World highway over looking both Lake Gregory (near Arrowhead) and San Bernardino on the other side.

They loved to travel. In the late 1930's my parents read in the L.A. Times that a Los Angeles society lady was lost on a glacier in Alaska. It turned out to be Grandmother Charlotte. Being an experienced hiker she had survived the night and hiked downhill until she was found.

In contrast to his father, Percy was the model of prudence. He showed me how he always put the vacuum cleaner away in the same box it had come in. His favorite story about me was one time when I was probably six years old. He asked me to bring something from the sun porch on the other side of his house. I got up to get it, but at the door to the hallway from their living room I stopped and asked “do I have to?”, Granddaddy said, “yes you do” and I happily turned and brought it.

**(P. 31)** Years later in 1952 when I was between college and the Air Force, Granddaddy telephoned me to come over. When I arrived he explained that at his age, he could no longer visit the mountain cabin because of the altitude and therefore wanted to give it to me or my cousin Vernon. He told me he also had a lot on the east fork in the Angeles Forest above Azusa where he had camped before they bought the cabin. Being young and noble, I told him he should give the cabin to Vern because I would be in military service for two years and be unable to rake the needles away from the cabin and turn off its water for winter. So I took the lot above Azusa sight unseen. Several years later, when we were living in Tarzana, we decided to find this lot. We drove up from Azusa, took the right fork, and found a few private cabins from before it became a national forest. An old prospector was chipping on an outcrop at the bend of the river so we asked him if he knew where Percy Thompson’s parcel was. He took us around the bend and pointed at some river bed. I told him Granddaddy had described a vertical bank which had been hydraulically mined for gold back in the 1800's, but had said there was a level piece of ground, then river bed, and then a sandspit island in the middle of the stream. The old prospector laughed and said all of that had been washed down the river in the 1936 flood. It had been twenty years since my Grandparents had been there!

**(P.32)** Later, we had a call from some people owning the adjacent lot, asking if they could buy ours.

I did not know how much to ask for. The County tax bill showed a nominal value under a \$100. We needed to buy a refrigerator, so I proposed \$300. My salary then was only \$400 per month. They bought the lot for the \$300. A couple of years later, Vern told me he was marrying a lady in Big Bear who owned her house so he wanted to sell the cabin at Rim of the World and thought I should have first chance. He thought the market for cabins there was about \$17,000. We did not have that much money so we thanked him for offering it to us first. There is a moral to be learned from this story. Don't buy property you have not seen!

### **(P.25-Parents & Sisters)**

July 19, 1963 my father Carl died at age 65. May 24, 1988 my mother Edith died at age of 92 (b.3/18/96). In January 24, 1989 my sister Adele died at the age of 65 (b. 1/31/24). In December 18, 1998 my sister Edy died at age of 70 (b. 6/28/28).

My family were all quite different. My father was a good man always starting something new. As a boy, he had taken his playmates into forming a Boy Scout Troop and received a medal made of a piece of wood chewed on by a beaver from Lord Baelen Powell himself. He had come west to California on hearing that there was a new university so well endowed that there was no tuition so he enrolled at the new Stanford University where he met mom who also majored in chemistry. He worked his way through college. He went to work first for Shell and then for General Petroleum (later merged into Mobil). At G.P. he recommended they build a gas plant to extract the gasoline from the wet gas from one of the new southern california oil fields. The Board turned it down but some of the directors said they would help finance it if he would run it on the side. He borrowed some money to put in to. Granddaddy Percy Thompson explained to me when I was a young boy that my father was a plunger taking too many risks, making a lot of money and then losing a lot. When the new plant was in danger of failing, Carl quit his job at GP to give full time to save it. He did.

Before long he and three other men - Earl Demond, Walter Cowan , and Andy Kirk were running a small refining company with a big name - United States Refining Co. with a refinery in north Long Beach

### **(pg. 27- Edith)**

In contrast to Carl being methodical, my mother, Edith, was quick, opinionated (some soldiers called her dogmatic), with a talent for connecting with strangers and getting their life history in their first conversation. However, she always played the teacher she was before she married whether she knew the subject or not. Her intensity wore some people out, and she was forever trying to make us children perfect - which we were not - still instructing us when we were over 50 years old like we were still 5. She was really well read and fun to talk with as long as you were not one of her children. Her relation to Dad was more competitive than warm.

My two sisters were also quite different. Adele was a spendthrift, good time girl who lived life with a capitol L like an Auntie Mame. She was able to do a quick study on anything once motivated. Every time she fell in love she studied her new lover's interest. This way she achieved a broad education - meteorology at University of Chicago where she flunked out but met her first husband, history and geography at UCLA where she graduated with honors inspired by two professors. On the

other hand she was a gullible romantic, however you wish to term it, believing in astrology and extra terrestrial people.

**(P. 28 - Edy)**

Edy as a child and teenager was bright with a gentle sense of humor. She skipped through classes and graduated from high school before she was 16 and graduated from Stanford at 19. She was working on a Masters in history when she started to elope with Howard Lewis, got cold feet, and broke it off. She dropped her studies and went off to Yosemite to wait on tables. Later she worked at an insurance company in San Francisco, caught a mild case of polio and recovered. Next she became mentally ill, not eating, sudden swings from depression to anger, fiercely independent refusing gifts or help even when reduced to sleeping in her car and cleaning houses. In contrast to Adele, Edy was a miser. Even after she became wealthy, she lived like a bag lady. It's a shame our children never were able to know her back when she was still a normal happy person.

**Reminiscence of Conrad von Bibra (So. Pas to Germany)**

**(Pg.1)** Born December 19, 1929 at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, California. I was named Conrad Carl Eberhard Rupert Freiherr von Bibra. My mother, Edith, thought she was naming me after the good Prince- Bishop of Wurzburg, Lorenz von Bibra, but by mistake named me after the later not-so-good Prince - Bishop, Conrad.

The first pictures and movies of me are from the lawn of the house at 722 Garfield Ave., South Pasadena which my parents built. They ??had built a duplex at 1734-36 Meridian, South Pasadena with Paul Barton who was another engineer at General Petroleum (later merged into Mobil) with whom my father, Carl, taught a petroleum refining class. Carl and Edith sold both properties in the depression of the early 1930's for \$10,000 each. (\$5,000 ea.?)

April 25, 1931 our family sailed to Europe on the Columbus from Los Angeles taking along Ruth, a nursemaid, and a seven passenger automobile with folding seats between the front and back seats. On arriving in Germany, Carl received a cablegram on May 17, 1931 from the United States Refining Co., Ltd. and my father returned to the USA for an urgent business problem. It was the Great Depression and the bank had stopped renewing its loans to his company.

I was too young to remember any of our long stay in Germany, but my mother Edith often spoke of her adventure (ordeal) being stranded with three children, Adele, Edy (Huberta then), myself and Ruth with not enough money to return to California while Dad was enjoying the social life of the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles with Egon Merz and Gustave Struve - the German Consul.

**Carl Business 1930's**

**(A-1; p.0)**The country was in the Great Depression. People stopped buying, companies were firing employees, and my father Carl was President and part owner of a small refining company with the impressive name of the United States Refining Co. Ltd. located in north Long Beach which had a string of gasoline stations with steeples so you could see them from a distance and sold purple



gasoline with the slogan to “use purple gasoline because it purrs on the long pull” The problem was that in good times the company had borrowed over \$400,000 on short term notes and invested the money in equipment. The President of the Farmer & Merchants Bank of Los Angeles was injured falling off his horse and the bank’s loan committee refused to rollover the notes and demanded full payment. The company had 200 gasoline stations but not enough money. As described in chapter 12 of the “Little Giant of Signal Hill” by Walker H. Thompkins, Signal Oil & Gas also had problems. They were selling all of their casing head gasoline to Standard Oil Co. Of California (later Chevron) and Standard was terminating the contract at midnight December 31, 1930. Signal could store their production only so long. Carl went to the office of San Mosher the president and major owner of Signal and they worked out a deal by which Signal purchased almost all of United States Refining Co. - the gas stations, refinery, even the name in exchange for taking over all the liability to the bank. Carl lost all he had invested, but avoided liability and probably bankruptcy on his personal guaranties to the bank. Fortunately, Carl and three US Refining associates had purchased and reworked some oil wells under the name of Exeter Oil Co. Ltd. They then raised some money by issuing Exeter stock for one-half the company on the Los Angeles curb and built a new refining and production company.

They sold Exeter Class A shares to the public for \$1.00 per share and were paying a high dividend. For every A share sold to the public, one Class B share was issued to the four founders. The class B shares received no dividends, but had equal voting rights. Of course they were unable to keep paying a 12 cent dividend and stopped in 1931 and except for 1937 none were paid again until I started Exeter paying 5 to 10 cents a year dividend in 1975 to pay off the \$1.00 preference to the Class A shares so that the Class B could be converted to Class A.

### **Inserts A&B**

**2A (enter on page 2)**At Brennhausen everything was primitive. There was no electricity, no running water, and no paved road. Eberhard and Josephine lived in the left or north tower and we were in the right or south tower. The water supply was a hand pump into a stone basin in the old kitchen of Josephine’s in the connecting wing between the two towers on the second floor. Apparently one of us children drank some water directly from the big spoon or ladle in the stone water basin. Josephine was so upset by this that she had the door from our side into her kitchen bricked up and it remained closed for over 30 years. We now had to go down our stairs and up hers, ring the bell and ask permission to visit her side of the house.

Edith spoke later about the blacksmith in Aub putting on snow chains to help her through the mud into Brennhausen, of modernizing the south (present) kitchen at Brennhausen with a porcelain sink, and wooden drain board, and wood stove, of people staring in the windows of our car to look at Ruth because she was black, of Ruth singing to herself that she had sex appeal, but it did not do her any good because there were no other Negroes around, of good times in Munich with Renata and Kurt Schaudenbach - the aunt and uncle of Paul Schaudenbach - Olga’s father. Kurt was a prominent photojournalist and did some lovely portraits of Edith as a young woman. Renata told of me running to my mother with one of her geese chasing after me. We played in the snow at Garmisch and one of the sleighs we brought home is still hanging in our basement. To stretch her money, Edith appears to have acted on advice of another friend anticipating devaluation of the German Reichsmark by driving

to Switzerland and changing her money into Swiss Franks until after the devaluation and then returning to Munich. Finally Dad sent enough money and we sailed back to America.

**(Pg.3 - Belmont Shore beach house & earthquakes)** On finally returning to California, we lived in a beach house at Belmont Shores at the southern tip of Long Beach - a sand bar between Alameda Bay and the ocean. Here I had the first two traumatic experiences to be imprinted into my memory. The first was the Long Beach Earthquake of 1933. I remember crouching under the table in the kitchen while bricks were falling down the chimney into the fireplace. Afterwards the wooden boardwalk along the beach was a wreck. The second memory was when the big boys down the street stole my wooden wagon and when we got it back one wheel was broken. Somehow we kept that broken wagon as we moved from house to house ever after, hoping that a wheel would magically appear. Finally, on my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, I decided it was time to finish my first childhood before starting my second childhood; however my family would not let me throw it away, and my brother-in-law, Rod Ingraham took it to his wood shop and made a new wheel to replace the one broken over 70 years before.

**(Pg. 4 - Palos Verdes)** Next, we moved to a house standing alone at the west edge of Palos Verdes Estates. Now it is surrounded with houses, but then it was next to a farmed field. The address is 1744 Palos Verdes Drive West.

With two older sisters, I was perpetually being chased. When this happened I would run past the piano, grab the big red book of folk songs, throw it at my sister and run out the back door. My mother would use the back side of a hair brush for a paddle but the only spankings I can recall were a couple which I thought were unjust. I can't even remember the spanking I must have received for the naughtiest day of my life. I found my Mother's pinking shears and went around the house trying their zig-zig pattern on curtains. When Mom saw my destruction and screamed, I ran into the upstairs bathroom, locked the door, and stayed there all afternoon despite her pleas and threats of what would happen when my father got home. With time on my hands, I found I could make beautiful rainbows of color in the bath tub with medicines - mercurachrome, iodine, gentian violet. I thought I had artistic talent until Dad came home, put a ladder up to the window and started climbing up. My goose was cooked! I looked at my Father coming up the ladder and he was not a happy father! I decided to open the door and threw myself at my Mother's mercy instead. I have no memory of what happened after that.

**(Pg. 5 - P.V. cont'd. & Van Ness)** It was in Palos Verdes that I started pre-school. Dad would drive me to school in the morning in his two door coupe with a rumble seat behind the cab. Often he would let me sit on his lap and hold the steering wheel while he did the gas peddle and brakes.

In 1935 or so we moved to 248 S. Van Ness Ave. at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. At the time it was a double lot with a tennis court on the second lot. Here I started kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade at the Third Street Grammar School. It was here that I played with Adele's woodworking tools and the tool slipped and cut my left hand leaving a long scar. It was also here where I satisfied my scientific curiosity by trying a cigarette of a home guest. My clever mother simply said "Oh, you want to try smoking? Come into the kitchen. We can make some. So we rolled our own using coffee grounds for tobacco. Of course, they got into my mouth, tasted awful, and cured me of any desire to smoke for the rest of my life. In 1937 we received typhoid vaccinations before traveling to Europe. Huberta became angry and threw

a pair of scissors down on the cement driveway, a tip broke off and entered my eye lid just missing the eyeball. It was from the eye doctor that I first learned that I was left handed which helps to explain my poor penmanship with my right hand.

**(Pg. 6 - Europe in 1937 to Benedict Canyon)**

The summer of 1937 touring Europe was a great experience. No one pays attention to seven year old boys, but believe me 7 year old boys see and hear everything! We first toured England, Ireland, and Scotland where I was photographed wearing the chain (necklace) of office with the Lord Mayor of Dublin and was stuffed into a canon at Edinborough castle. Germany was an education on life under a totalitarian state. Uniforms and propaganda billboards were everywhere. People were afraid to talk politics any where they could be overheard by anyone who might tell. Thirty eight years later we first entered East Germany with Frau Epstein and it was the same experience with the communist as with the Nazis. The highlight for me was seeing a jousting match and medieval punishments put on by the German Calvary in Dresden as the guest of Col. Merz - Egon's and Sigrid's father.

At Brennhausen, Uncle Eberhard was blind with cataracts and spent much of his time in bed with his dog serving as his foot warmer with just his nose sticking out for air. I thought this to be a wonderful idea. Even without electricity or a road, Eberhard and Josephine did have a telephone - the first one in the are!

On returning to California we were suddenly in another house, 1815 Benedict Canyon. The lease on the Van Ness house had expired while we were away so Bill Fain had rented a mission style house closer to where my parents planned to build and moved everything there. It was one story with a badminton court behind and a one room garden house. Best of all there were four neighboring boys about my age who were great playmates - the only three years I had neighboring playmates while growing up. When it rained, the street became a river. And when the diversion ditch behind the house over flowed, water entered the furnace room on the back up-hill side of the house and came out the heating vents making a big pond in the sunken dining room. Great fun! I was into building radio crystal sets. At bed time I could hide the earphones inside my pillow case and listen while pretending to be asleep. On occasion in the summer when it was still light, I would wait until Mom looked in to see if I was asleep, and then pull on my pants and go out the window to play some more with my friends. We had a German Pointer dog "Biberla", guinea pigs, and ducks.

In 1940 the new house at 1225 Angelo Drive was finished and we moved in. It was much bigger - about 8000 square feet. I had not only a bedroom, but my own bathroom, hobby shop and porch. In back I had not only chickens, pigeons, rabbits, but also a horse. However, there were no neighboring boys to play with - just my dog, Biberla.

**(Pg.8 - Education)** My early education was unusual. Preschool at Palos Verdes, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade+at Third Street Grammar School. In those days they did not start reading until the first grade which I failed because my reading was not satisfactory. Instead of repeating 1<sup>st</sup> grade, I went to UCLA! My mother took me to a professor, Grace Fernald of their Education Dept. While waiting to be interviewed, I was given a mechanical puzzle. I thought it was for amusement. But when we started the interview, she observed that I had solved the puzzle. She said, I was intelligent enough but just not wired up for reading. So I joined 6 or 8 other non-readers, mostly boys including my cousin Vern

Thompson. Education students would work with us both in reading, phonics and writing words in large letters two inches high. I remember a time when a couple of us were taken into a lecture hall where I was asked to write “cat” on the board. I wrote KAT. Dr. Fernald gently observed to the large class that while KAT was not the conventional spelling, it was phonetically correct. I liked UCLA.

The next two years I was at the Brentwood Town and Country School at San Vicente and 26<sup>th</sup> street. They had a donkey there and its strong smell impressed me. The school was in walking distance to the Riviera Country Club where my “honorary uncle” Egon Merz had horses I could ride.

Finally, for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade I rejoined my classmates at Third Street Grammar School even though we lived a long way from the Third Street’s district. I guess my mother did not like the school for Holmby Hills. Benedict Canyon and 1225 Angelo Drive are in an area called “Beverly Hills Post Office” because the postal address is Beverly Hills even though it is outside the Beverly Hills city limits in an isolated part of Los Angeles City with L.A.’s higher taxes. After school at Third Street I would walk home with my classmate Guy Earl and play at his house on June Street only two blocks away until my mother would pick me up.

By now we were in World War II with gasoline rationing and anti German and Japanese feelings. Some long time “friends” stopped socializing with us. Others like the Earls made extra efforts to have me included in parties, etc. We had it much better than the West Coast Japanese who were relocated or my father in WWI, when his teacher told him his name could no longer be Carl, but would now have to be Charles. In WWI music by Beethoven was not played. In WWII Beethoven’s 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony was popular.

For 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade I attended Emerson Jr. High School by Westwood. For the 9<sup>th</sup> grade we had applied to Harvard School, a military academy in North Hollywood on Coldwater Canyon road which was owned by the Episcopal Church. I was accepted to start the second semester. At Harvard’s suggestion I did the 1<sup>st</sup> semester at Saint Monica’s Catholic School just above the beach at Santa Monica.. Granddaddy Percy Thompson - a devoted Baptist warned me not to let them convert me; I was even afraid to make the sign of the cross the first few weeks. However, the nuns and a Priest named Father Houlihan were the best teachers I have ever had. I liked it there. While the catholic students had an hour of religious studies every day, I had a second study hall and could finish my homework before school was out. I then rode my bicycle over to Egon’s and his horses at the Riviera Country Club. After a ride, we put my bicycle on his car and he drove me up the hill to my home. It was too good to last.

For the spring semester I started Harvard School. We wore olive green uniforms with coats and ties everyday except Thursdays when we wore our heavy and hot dress blue uniforms for the weekly parade. I did not like Harvard - the arbitrariness of the military, the sanctimony of the church, or the sarcasm of our Latin teacher. I wanted to leave, but the principal talked my parents into keeping me there.

**(Pg. 11 - Colleges)** Despite not enjoying Harvard School, the competition of my classmates gave me a good education. However, their grading on the curve left us at a disadvantage in competing for the college of our choice. Only two classmates were accepted by Stanford. Williams, a math wiz, flunked out because of playing cards all night. The other was Derek Bok, the best of our class, who went on

to become the president of Harvard University twice. I went first to UCLA which I enjoyed and where I received better grades than in high school. I transferred up to Stanford a year later. I enjoyed both colleges. The teaching quality was equal, but because I lived at home while at UCLA, I found Stanford to be 400 miles better. In 1948-49, my first year at Stanford, I was elected with Rick West, a friend from junior high days, later killed in the Korean War, to represent our dormitory, a former army barracks, as India in a Model United Nations. Charles Malik of Lebanon came out to lead it. He was a nice gentleman who made it fun. The Stanford student body had almost all of their student international activities, international relief, UNESCO, conferences, etc. assembled together under the rather formal title of the Institute of International Relations or IIR. Apparently I must have caught the eye of its Business Manager who recruited me to work there with him. This turned out to be an important decision a couple of years later. This extra curricular activity broadened my last years and taught me leadership and organizational skills which proved more useful than the chemical engineering I majored in.

At Stanford I lived in Encino and Stanford Village the first year, Toyon the second, Stern Hall the third, and the 4<sup>th</sup> year off campus with Howard Lewis in a small vacation home he was renting. In my third year at Stanford, Exeter Refining went out of business, but it was too late to change my major. I was offered a summer job by Union Oil in their refining department and by Mobil in their drilling and production department. I chose Mobile. The experience roughnecking and ditch digging taught me the intelligence and skill of manual laborers and also the way they make themselves look busy when there was really nothing to do.

Starting my last year at Stanford, I was President of the Institute of International Relations and Pat Terry was our Vice President. She had an admirer from Fresno, so when she asked one morning if I would like to come to the Girl Ask Boy Formal Dance at her dormitory. I thought she was asking for a friend, and I answered, "Sure, with whom?" but she said, "with me"! Things began to change.

After we held a UNESCO Conference for high school students which Pat had organized, a \$500 donation arrived to send a delegate from Stanford to UNESCO conference in New York City. I was sent and stayed with my high school classmate Buz Hill-Smith and his mother in the Waldorf Astoria Towers. While there, Harry Hall and I went over to the United Nations and asked to see Ralph Bunche, the UN Mediator for Palestine, who had come to Stanford the previous year for an intercollegiate model UN which we had organized. We were shown right in for a short visit with him. A year later I would not have gotten past the first receptionist. It's wonderful what people will do for students!

Upon returning to Palo Alto, I began courting Pat Terry and by graduation we were pinned. Just think if I had not become involved in the IIR as an extra curricular activity, I would never have met the love of my life.

Following graduation I waited for orders to report for active duty with the U.S. Air Force as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. from the ROTC. I worked briefly with a fiber glass laminated antenna company in Los Angeles while Pat worked in San Francisco for the World Affairs Council.

**Air Force:** In the fall of 1952 I reported to San Antonio, Texas and was sent to Supply School in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Corresponding by letter left a lot to be desired so we decided to marry between Christmas and New Years in Fresno. With little time to prepare, everything was well organized except

for me. Driving out with another officer from Beverly Hills, we were caught in a blizzard and slid into a jack-knived truck. I broke my nose on the dash board. This was before the time of seat and shoulder belts.

After winter in Cheyenne, we were sent to a SAC base in El Paso. We had just settled into a base house when orders came transferring me to the Carribbean Air Command in the Panama Canal Zone where I spent the next year and a half during the War in Korea. Pat joined me a half year later. Officially I was the Assistant Base Engineer, but most of my time was spent being in charge of the housing office, clothing sales store, and as Commander of the Air Force Honor Guard.

In early 1955, we returned to New Jersey. Using my severance pay on returning to civilian life, we bought a new car and drove to California. Pat was very pregnant with Brenn who was born March 14<sup>th</sup>. Exeter Oil had just discovered a new oil zone between Taft and Maricopa and was short handed. I went to work for Exeter and was on duty drilling the fourth well to the Exeter Zone when we picked up a new horizon of oil. It tested out to be another flowing well. I was asked to give this new zone a name. So I suggested and the California State Division of Oil and Gas named it the "Pat Zone". How many wives are honored to have an oil zone named for them. But then when Chevron failed to find oil in the same sand across the property line, it turned out to be just a one well puddle.

When not staying in the Taft Motel, we rented a Cliff May tract home in Lakewood Village until Exeter hired a petroleum engineer named John Wallace from Texaco. In 1956, we then took a one year leave from Exeter and sailed to Europe with baby Brenn. This was the first time one of our family had visited our ancestral home, Brennhausen, since 1937. (Eugen Bauer and Howard Lewis had visited there in the 1940's while in the army of occupation). Brennhausen was still like in the middle ages. We first went with Helmunt. The road from Aub was too muddy to get through so we parked in the woods and walked in carrying Brenn. Josephine and her sister Countess Lolo Norman-Ehrenfels served us tea. By the time we said goodbye, it was raining and getting dark as we walked toward Aub and finally found our VW Beagle in the woods.

Refugees evicted from the Sudetenland by Czechoslovakia at the end of WWII had been assigned to the southern or right hand tower of Brennhausen. One family of six still lived on the third and fourth floors. Josephine had what are now the breakfast room and dining room painted and furnished as our bedroom and living room. However, the doorway between the entrance hall and the old kitchen of Josephine's was still bricked up. Consequently, Herr Klein had to carry water in a large container on his back from the well in the middle of the farmyard, up two flights of stairs to Frau Kirschlager's kitchen on the third floor every evening after working as a farm hand all day for Herr Heer who leased the farm land. The lease then was part cash and part "naturalien" of bread, milk, a pig twice a year, and two trips to Konigshofen/or Aub. The rent was lower than others because Brennhausen still did not have a road or electricity. The toilets were still an out-house on each tower hanging outside the wall like a small bay window. Although they were on the east side, which was normally down wind, the wind occasionally changed to come from the east to the west. The whole house had a distinctive smell. It stank.

Uncle Eberhad had died in 1940. At the end of the monarchy after WWI, Fiefs like Brennhausen had been changed into private property subject to taxation and inheritance laws. Also the

“Fidei Komiss” Trusts, by which families had kept their properties in the hands of male heirs only, had been terminated. The result was that Josephine, as Eberhardts’ widow now owned his undivided one half of Brennhausen. Even worse, she had promised to leave her half to a nephew of her family.

We have Sigismund von Bibra to thank for persuading her to keep it in the family. In the spring of 1957 my parents, Carl and Edith, came over and we jointly provided a modest annuity to her for the rest of her life and she transferred her half of the property to me.

Josephine died in 1960, her sister in 1965 or 66, and I received the other half when Carl died in 1963.

**(Pg. 17)** During 1956 -7, Pat and I lived primarily in Munich in an attic apartment in Harlaching not too far from the University in Schwabing. Our German was not good enough to take regular courses so we studied German. Every month or two we would take off driving to different parts of Europe. We had hired a teenager, Annelise Wokurke to care for Brenn. She spoke no English when she started, but she learned English faster and better than we learned German.

By the end of the year we had explored Italy, Greece, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavia. We had become acquainted with almost all of the Bibra cousins in Germany and Sir Eric and Dulce von Bibra in London. Fletcher and Cleo Terry joined us in Italy in the spring time and Cleo’s suitcase with all her clothes was stolen from our car in the parking lot of The Villa Borghesa Museum in Rome. Some twenty years later, Margaret’s suitcase was stolen from our locked car in the same parking lot!

A special pleasure that year was getting to know Tante Leoni, my grandfather’s sister. She was then 89 and as sharp as ever. Oh how I wish there had been a small tape recorder then. She was such a great story teller I sometimes wondered if she had a talent for making a good story even better. She was a talking, first hand historian of my grand parents and my great grandparents.

**(Pg.18)** Returning to California in late summer of 1957, we rented a two bedroom house in a 1 or 2 acre parcel in Tarzana. The back half was a fig orchard. Behind the house were three fenced pens for dogs. We had chickens, ducks, and rabbits. Twice a year I would rent a tractor and plow under the weeds in the orchard.

At Exeter I received new responsibilities as Manager of Production. John Wallace was Manager of Exploration. We both reported to the Vice President, Laurence Donnelly. Oil prices were good and we were active. We found a new pool in the Oceanic Sand near Fellows. We drilled dry holes and marginal teasers in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and even up in the Dakotas. We learned the hard way that the locals know their territory better than outsiders like us who ended up with the left over deals. Our offices had grown to nine people. Bottomhole heaters had become very popular for heavy oil. We drilled six development wells at Derby Acres north of Taft just in time for the price of heavy oil to drop 40% from \$2.50 to \$1.50 per barrel. The six wells did not pay out until over 12 years later. It was time to retrench to survive.

I was made a Vice President and given responsibilities to reduce overhead and stop the losses of the air-blown asphalt operation in Long Beach. The office went from nine to three people with the help of the new photocopier, eliminating the need for four or five carbon copies and two secretaries. Write-it-once checkbook and simplified cost accounting eliminated three more people. My old boss

Laurence decided to retire so I assumed his duties as well. We moved Exeter's office from the high rent Petroleum Building in downtown L.A. to the old refinery site in Long Beach and no rent. We put our office in a 20' x 20' two office corrugated steel shack at the entrance to the asphalt plant so the two office personnel could handle the bills of lading of the trucks coming through to pick up roofing asphalt. The asphalt plant stopped losing money, but never became profitable enough. We sold it ten years later and moved the office to South Pasadena.

In 1958 Anne was born. In 1960 Margaret was born. Carla, Adele's daughter was living with us, and we decided to buy a used station wagon to take a camping trip up the west coast into Canada. There was one for sale in the neighborhood so we bought it from a man named Jack Catain. Catain showed up several years and mergers later as President of Rusco Industries at a time we had a lawsuit with Rusco. Jack was always a gentleman with me. It was only later that it became public that he was a mafioso and died when he was being charged with counterfeiting. It shows you never know.

In 1961 I became President of Exeter Oil and Dad was operated on for cancer in his prostate.

In 1962 Carl and Edith took Pat and me plus Carla and Brenn to Europe. We drove from Oslo to North Cape, took a steamer from Hammerfest To Bergen before driving down to Brennhausen.

Since our last visit in 1957, Brennhausen had been improved with a paved road to Sulzdorf and electric power. With power came running water so Dad ordered two modern bathrooms to be built. One on the second floor and one on the third. He did not live long enough to use them. Josephine and Lolo and Liesette loved having warm water and electric heat in the only warm rooms in the castle.

Pat and I left in August leaving Brenn and Carla to return with Carl and Edith, and we went east around the world through Athens (Greece), Istanbul (Turkey), Jerusalem (Israel), Cairo (Egypt), Karachi (Pakistan), Delhi and Dehran Dun (India), Bangkok (Thailand), Kyoto, Tokyo (Japan) and home. It was a wonderful adventure for us, but the closer we came to home, the sooner we wanted to get back to the children.

In 1963 Carl died of bladder cancer. As Executor of his estate I was soon involved in litigation for years with his former partner Ed Koppelman, with the Farmers & Merchants Bank of Long Beach over continuing guarantees, with Rusco and Bank Leumi of Israel over a loan for Rusco which had been paid to Koppelman, but which Leumi tried to collect from the Estate even suing in Germany to attach Brennhausen. In the end the Estate was solvent, but all we saved was Exeter Oil and Refining Properties. Money brings out the worst in people.

By the 1970's Exeter was improving. Cyclic Steam Stimulation which Shell had discovered by accident in Venezuela was proving profitable in California. With steam injection, some of our shallow Potter Sand wells responded by increasing from 2BOPD to 10 BOPD. At less than 1000 feet deep they could be drilled and completed in three days. The Arab Oil Embargo in 1973 raised the price of oil worldwide. Exeter sold off all the land of the old refinery site in Long Beach including the roofing asphalt plant and put the money into heavy oil wells north of Taft. By 1975 Exeter started paying dividends to its stockholders for the first time since 1937. During this time I was active in the industry both as a token independent director of the Western Oil & Gas Association dominated by the major oil companies and as Chairman of the Conservation Committee of the California Oil Operators and its

Engineering Board.

**(P.20-1/2)** I was also active on committees of Calvary Presbyterian Church, The Synod of Southern California, and the Presbytery of San Gabriel where I chaired their Judicial Commission through two adultery trials and finally in 1982 as Moderator of the Presbytery and as a Delegate to the General Assembly in Hartford, Conn..

**P.21** By 1982 the price of oil began to soften. Major companies like Sun Oil were still wanting to buy smaller companies, but their offer to Exeter was too low. By the fall of 1983 Getty Oil Company offered 66 million dollars. By the rules of the SEC, Exeter had to issue a press release on Thursday saying the amount of the offer and that a special stockholders meeting was being called to consider and approve their offer. On Saturday Sun telephoned to say they would pay more, even though Getty's offer was much more than they had offered just a year before when oil prices were higher. The following Monday their acquisition team arrived. On Wednesday their Executive V.P. arrive from Philadelphia to make their offer. I stalled him off until after the Western Oil & Gas Association meeting that morning so I could sound out two other companies on their interest in our Oxnard Tar. When we met it was swift. Sun's Executive V.P. shoved their offer into my coat pocket and said I had three hours to make up my mind. Our team left to discuss it. Sun's offer was substantially higher than Gettys'. I gave Getty the chance to raise their offer if they wished to. Getty did raise their offer, but not enough. We accepted Sun's offer of 75.6 million and they suggested we have dinner together. I then called Pat whom I had told that morning that I would not sell to Sun because I didn't like their negotiator. This time I said we were having dinner tonight with those nice gentlemen from Sun who had just bought the company! At 54 I had just retired.

**(P.22)** Up to the sale of Exeter, we had to live on my salary as the children were growing up. Generally every other year starting in 1969 we would fly to Germany, buy a used VW mini bus, and travel around Europe staying at camp grounds in our tent and sleeping bags when the weather was dry in order to keep down the cost of hotels for the seven or eight of us. We often had a niece or friend along also. I have fond memories of these trips, but we appear to have overdone the camping because none of our five children want to go camping now as adults.

On closing the sale of Exeter, we started traveling in style starting in the spring of 1984. We flew to Germany with Margaret to pick up Anne and Terry who both were studying there that year and traveled down through Africa from Egypt to Kenya to Tanzania to Victoria Falls to Zimbabwe to the Republic of South Africa. This was a fascinating trip full of memories of traveling from one wild animal park to another, staying in nice lodges each night, getting stuck in the mud all day in Nagoro Goro crater with no one noticing until after dark when we lit a fire and a jeep finally came down and rescued us. We rode the Blue Train from Johannesburg to Capetown and then drove a BMW to Durban.

**(P.23)**In 1985 we organized the first Bibra family reunion since 1929 with Helmut and Otto Siegfried. We also celebrated Carl and Terry graduating from their universities by going around the world starting the long way through Fiji, Australia, Indonesia, Ceylon, India, Israel, Egypt to Germany. In Australia we met many Bibras in Melbourne and on the island of Tasmania where there were more Bibras than in Germany and the USA combined. The family reunion at Adelsdorf and Brennhausen was a great success with over 50 people from all around the world - Australia, Zimbabwe, England, even some

Americans I had never met before. Afterwards most of the guests (except for the Germans who were not permitted) caravanned into East Germany to see Bibra Castle and the church with all the family gravestones inside.

Since then we have had Bibra family reunions in Germany in 1994 and 2005 and Tasmania, Australia in 1996. The last two had 90 - 100 participants including many children.

**(P.24) Business**

On receiving cash from Sun Oil, Pat and I interviewed money manager/investment advisors in both California and New York. We chose a half dozen managers with different approaches to the stock market - top down, bottom up, growth, value, big, small, etc. The idea was to spread risk like in the oil business where one should not speculate with more money in a wildcat well than you can afford to lose. One sixth of the purchase price went to me, the same amount into two trusts for Adele, and same into the two trusts for Edy (Edith Huberta). Both sisters had a trust from our father and another for our mother (Edith R. von Bibra). I chose Morgan Stanley and Openheimer and smaller managers like Kennedy Capital (St. Louis), Campbell, Reed, & O'Conner, Winship, one mutual fund - The Templeton World Fund, and kept a couple of brokers I had been working with before.

The accounting was now more than could be done by hand, so I asked Carl to come and get our bookkeeping computerized. Later I asked him to manage a couple of portfolios and he did as well as some of the managers we were paying so we started closing out some managers. After five years of tracking their performance, I found each style would out perform the S&P500 Index a couple of years and then underperform a couple of years. If I had put the stock allocation all into a S&P500 Index Fund, we would have achieved about the same results with less work but also less fun. When the stock market crashed in 1987, we had positions in around 1200 different stocks and found that even that much diversification did not help in a crash. They all went down. Fortunately the portfolios had recovered by a year later. However, I decided to simplify our operation into fewer managers and fewer stocks.

*Conrad von Bibra*