

Nathan Friedmann Family History

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1. Nathan Friedmann

Until the mid 19th Century fifty Jewish families lived in the small Thuringian village Aschenhausen – including Bernhard and Rosa Friedmann (née Ehrenreich). They were the parents of Nathan Friedmann, who was born on 9th May 1869 in Aschenhausen. In 1871, the twins Thekla and Rebekka appeared on the scene. Nathan’s brother Samuel was born in 1879, and in 1885 his sister Sophie.

Nathan Friedmann Becomes a Teacher and Cantor

On 30th October 1884 he married in Roßdorf. His wife Sarah, known as Settchen, came from the Roßdorf Family May. It was here that their three sons were born: in 1895 Salomon, in 1897 Hugo and in 1899 Ludwig.

In the newspaper “Der Israelit” appeared the following announcement on 24th November 1904:

The position of a Tutor of Religion, Cantor and Schochet, in connection with the Department of Religious Studies at the *Realschule* and with a secure income of 1,600 Marks, is to be filled by a suitably qualified Teacher. Applicants should send their CV and references to the below signed.
—F. Sundheimer, Heppenheim an der Bergstraße.

Nathan Friedmann became the new teacher, cantor und Schochet of the Jewish community in Heppenheim. In 1905 he moved with his family to the Bergstraße, presumably to the house at Lorscher Straße 23.

At that time there was much building being done in Heppenheim. The Synagogue at the foot of the Starkenburg was only completed in 1900 and officially opened with a religious service on 10th October. A ston stairway led

up to Nathan Friedmann's new place of work. He will have climbed these many times until 1938 to perform his services.

At the *Großherzoglichen Oberrealschule* (the high school of the time) Nathan taught Israelite Religion. His remit consisted of eight weekly lessons in four "departments". In 1909, 29 Jewish pupils attended his Religious Instruction lessons. His sons were also pupils of the school.

An offer for holidays at home was offered at the Friedmann house in the newspaper "Frankfurter israelitischen Familienblatt" 1907/08.



Friedmann also taught elsewhere from 1915. According to his contract, he taught RI three hours a week at the Jewish community in nearby Birkenau. For this he received an annual remuneration including travel expenses. In 1920 there was a quarrel with the Jewish community. The trains to Birkenau were not running for several weeks and he couldn't attend his lessons. The Jewish community in Birkenau therefore reduced his salary. An argument ensued which resulted in the cancellation of his teaching contract.

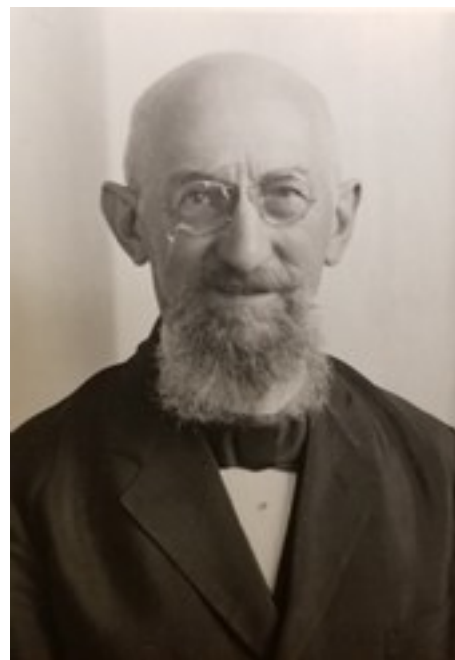
In May 1924 Nathan Friedmann assumed the office of Treasurer of the Jewish community in Heppenheim, replacing Emanuel Meyerhof.

Nathan bought the house at Lorscher Straße 23 in 1919. Irma Reiss, née Goldblum lived as a child only a few houses away. She reports that in the Friedmann's garden there was a pretty Sukkah (shed) which was used by the Jewish community for their garden parties. During the winter it was used to house the gardening tools.

Settchen Friedmann died on 15th August 1931 at the age of 61. She was buried at the Jewish cemetery in Alsbach. Nathan Friedmann was now alone. All three of their sons had occupations away from Heppenheim and no longer lived there.

With the emergence of the National Socialists and their ascent to power in 1933, life for Jewish people became ever more difficult. Antisemitism became more and more public. One very visible sign of this was the re-naming of streets. Nathan no longer lived in Lorscher Straße but in Ferdinand-Werner-Straße 23.

He sold the house on 3rd August 1938 to the tobacco factory owner Ferdinand Bösche. The revenue from the sale was put into a "protected" account at the *Bezirkssparkasse* Heppenheim (local bank). Friedmann was only allowed access to the money with a dispensation from the currency office in Frankfurt.



Nathan Friedmann

Nathan Friedmann lived in Heppenheim for 33 years. The final weeks he lived with his niece, Bertha Goldblum, In der Krone 7. He departed there on 10th August 1938.

The now 69-year-old went to a Jewish senior residence at Gagernstraße 16, Frankfurt. A few days earlier, his son Hugo had left Frankfurt with the family to emigrate to the USA. Ludwig had fled the previous year.

In Frankfurt son Walter lived for several months with his father. In March 1939, Friedmann wrote to the currency office with a polite request to withdraw the sum of RM 1,044 from his account at the *Bezirkssparkasse* Heppenheim a. B. He included a list of the reasons he needed the money, with a small amount for personal use, for rent and living costs. The much larger amount was for Walter, who emigrated to Shanghai in 1939.

In May 1939 Nathan Friedmann turned 70. In a letter he paid tribute to the Frankfurter Rabbi Kirschbaum as a God-fearing and just man, and as a man of peace.

MENACHEM MENDEL KIRSCHBAUM
RABBI OF FRANKFURT AM MAIN

BORUCH HASHEM, FRANKFURT AM MAIN, THE
SIXTH DAY OF THE WEEK, THE DAY PRECEDING
THE SABBATH, THE YEAR 5699

I AM HEREBY A WITNESS TO THE FACT THAT
NATHAN, THE SON OF PEREZ FRIEDMANN,
HAS BEEN A SHOCHET, BODEK AND TEACHER
AT THE BETH HASEFER OF BROSDORF AND
AFTERWARDS AT HEPPENHEIM

HE IS OCCUPIED WITH SACRED WORK, AND
IS A G-D-FEARING, RIGHTEOUS AND JUST MAN.
AND FROM HIS YOUTH UNTO THIS VEAY
DAY, AT WHICH TIME HE IS SEVENTY YEARS
AGE, HE HAS ALWAYS LIVED ACCORDING TO
THE LETTER OF THE LAW.

I THEREFORE HONOR HIM, IN THE PRESENCE
OF THE ELDERS OF OUR NATION, WITH THE
TITLE OF CHAVER. AND HENCEFORTH IN
ALL SACRED DEALINGS HE WILL BE REFERRED
TO AS HECHMER NATHAN THE SON OF
PEREZ

JUSTLY HAS HE BEEN CALLED FRIEDMANN,
FOR HE IS A MAN OF PEACE, A MAN WITH
WHOM THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND OF MAN-
KIND ARE WELL PLEASED.
MAY THE LORD GRANT HIM STRENGTH
AND POWER, THAT HE MAY CONTINUE
PROSPERING TO A VERY RIPE OLD AGE.

אשריך ליהוה מין

Nathan Friedmann fell ill and was admitted to the Rothschild Hospital in September 1940. He died on 27th December of heart disease and bronchial cancer at the age of 71. He was buried at the New Jewish Cemetery in Frankfurt.



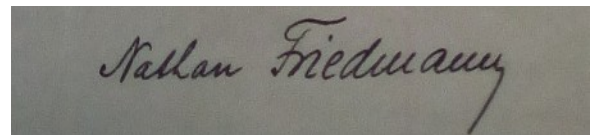
Nathan and Settchen in the garden



Links Nathan Freidmann



Nathan Friedman's grave in Frankfurt



Nathan Friedmann's signature

2. The Three Sons

Nathan und Settchen Friedmann's three sons were born in Roßdorf. When the family moved to Heppenheim in 1905, Salomon (Sally) was ten, Hugo eight and Ludwig six years old. They attended the *Oberrealschule* where their father also taught.

All three brothers were keen footballers. A photo from 1913 shows they all played for Starckenburgia.

Even after the brothers went their ways, the family remained close-knit.

The years of National Socialism took them in different directions. Ludwig fled to Uruguay, Hugo and his family to USA, and Walter/Sally with his wife to Shanghai. After the war, Hugo's home in the USA became the address uniting the brothers. Walter and Ludwig returned to Germany. Hugo remained in the US.



Walter Friedmann

He was born on 17th September 1895.

The eldest son was given the name Salomon at birth. He was known as Sally and later he called himself Walter.

Walter became an opera singer. One of his earliest engagements took him as an actor and singer to the *Stadttheater* (city theatre) in Augsburg in 1918/19. There followed engagement in Gera, Königsberg, Plauen and Aachen. He stopped off in Heppenheim in 1925 to give an evening of entertainment at Wurth's Garten (Saalbau today) in support of Starkenburgia's new sports ground. From 1926 to 1933 he was engaged as a singer at the National Theatre in Mannheim and so was able to live for a time near his parents.

He probably met the singer and actress Hilde Ebler while in Mannheim. They both took up an engagement at the *Stadttheater* in Zurich from 1933 to 1936, where they married the first year. During an engagement at Lucerne in 1935, Walter was expelled from the *Reichstheaterkammer* (national chamber of theatre) in Germany. This was effectively a professional ban.

The couple probably returned to Germany in 1936. At the end of 1938, Walter lived for some months with his father at the residence in Frankfurt. Hilde meanwhile was registered at Hartmannstraße 6 in Mannheim.

Leaving Germany became more and more difficult. Walter and Hilde Friedmann managed to escape to Genoa and boarded the *Biancamano* on 29th March 1939. They arrived in Shanghai after nearly four weeks at sea.

Life in Shanghai was extremely difficult in all aspects for the refugees. In the book "Biographisches Lexikon der Theaterkünstler" (Biographical Lexicon of Theatre Artists), Walter Friedmann is reported to have been the most active producers at the Shanghai theatre with at least 20 productions in which he was actor, singer and dancer. He directed his own variety evenings.

At the end of World War II he and Hilde were officially registered as refugees in 1946. The place of origin is given as Hugo's address. Walter and Hilde travelled to New York.

Around 1967 Walter and Hilde returned to Germany. They settled in Bad Orb, in Haselstraße 8. They re-established contact to Heppenheim. Walter apparently took part in the 1975 anniversary of the Starkenburgia Football Club.

Walter Friedmann died at the age of 80 on November 1st, 1975 in the hospital at Bad Orb. He was buried in the communal cemetery there.

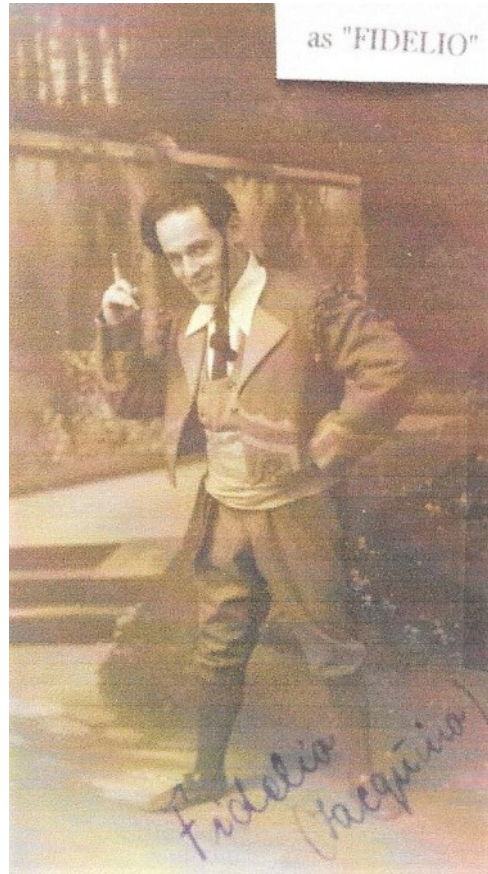
Hilde Friedmann died on 25th July, 1995.

1 YEAR OLD
1896

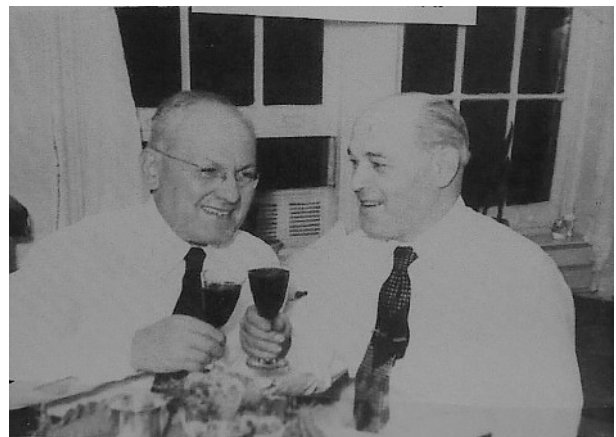


J. Engel, Hofphotogr. Frankfurt a. M., Zeit 70.

as "FIDELIO"



Birthday card
for HUGO.
March 8, 1937



Hugo and Walter

Hugo Friedmann

He was born on 8th March 1897 in Roßdorf.

From 1907 to 1913 he was a pupil of the *Oberrealschule* in Heppenheim.

Before 1924 he took courses at the company Telefunken and worked from 1924 in the firm of Telefunken-Vertriebs-GmbH. The company was liquidated in 1928 and Hugo was transferred to the Telefunken company for wireless telegraphy. There he was responsible for radio dealers, electrical installators and wholesalers.

In 1930 Hugo celebrated his engagement to Gertrud Blum (born 1st January 1902). Gertrud's mother Charlotte, née Mainzer (1875–1943) came from Heppenheim. She was the daughter of Wolf and Babette Mainzer and was married to the wine merchant Gustav Blum (1865–1943) from Nierstein.

In November 1918 the 16-year-old Gertrud came to Heppenheim and attended the *Oberrealschule* there. During this time she lived in Friedrichstraße with her uncle Jakob Mainzer (today: *Stadthaus*). It's possible that Hugo and Gertrud already met each other during this time.

The couple married in 1931 in Mainz.

In the same year, Hugo and Gertrud Friedmann moved from Mainz to Frankfurt, to the residential settlement Unter den Kastanien. On 16th November 1931 son Werner was born.

Until November 1933 Hugo was a travelling representative for Telefunken Gesellschaft für drahtlose Telegraphie GmbH (Telefunken company for wireless telegraphy). But then he was released because he was a "Non-Arian".

Hugo tried to build a new life. He bought the food factory "Kurth und Hohenberg" in Essen and moved it to Frankfurt. Two years later, in September 1935, he sold the factory. Hugo entered his father-in-law's wine commission company as a partner in Mainz. But this occupation also had no future.

The Friedmanns left their apartment at Unter den Kastanien and moved to Töplitzstraße 8, in 1936. In 1937 it was renamed Robert-Koch-Straße.

The family applied for an emigration permit. Part of this was to provide details of their personal finances, and of the goods they intended to take with them. Hugo, Gertrud and Werner left German in August 1938. They travelled to Antwerp, where they departed for New York on the steamship Pennland of the Red Star Line Hamburg on 6th August.

The then servant of the Blums met them at New York harbour. Hugo's Aunt Sofie Justus (Nathan Friedmann's sister) as also living with her husband Julius in New York and she also helped the new arrivals.

In New York, Hugo worked initially as a doorman, then as a travelling salesman for hearing aids, later as a warehouseman, and after 1950 as a representative of a whisky company.

Hugo and Gertrud Friedmann moved to Norwich.

Gertrud Friedmann née Blum died on December 12th, 1980, and soon after, on May 1st 1981 her husband Hugo.

Their son Werner had a military career. He was married and had three children. Werner died on October 20th, 2000.

(Gustav and Charlotte Blum were deported to Theresienstadt and died there in 1943.)



Gertrud, Werner and Hugo



Engagement of Hugo Friedmann and Gertrud Blum. Front row: Gertrud Blum and Hugo Friedmann, Settchen Friedmann; left side: Nathan Friedmann, back standing: Ludwig and Walter Friedmann



Walter, Werner, Hugo, Hilde and Gertrud

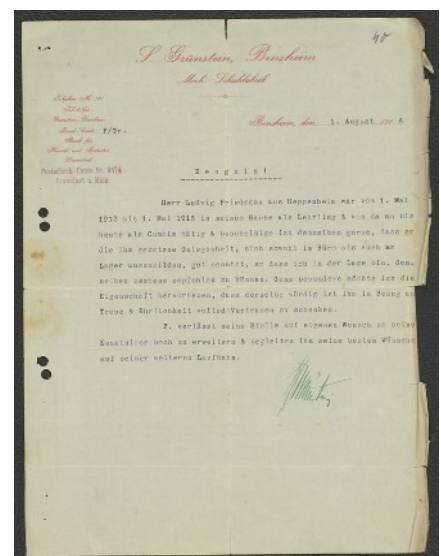
Ludwig Friedmann

He was born on 29th May 1899 in Roßdorf.

After his schooling at the *Realoberschule*, Ludwig completed a apprenticeship in commerce at the Grünstein mechanical shoe factory in Bensheim between 1913 and 1916.

In January 1920 he was employed by the shoe factory J. & C.A. Schneider (JCAS). (In the 1920s JCAS was one of the largest shoe manufacturers in Europe with more than 3000 employees. The company was a generous sponsor of the football club Eintracht Frankfurt, from which the nickname “Schlappekicker” (slipper kickers) derives). Ludwig was in the distribution department. This included overseeing the production warehouse and control of all goods leaving the warehouse.

The increased persecution of Jews was felt in all avenues of life. At work Jews were discriminated against. Ludwig was forced out of his supervisory role and replaced by a new supervisor. A Jew was not allowed to give instructions. In 1934, Ludwig reported, “the owners of this business, being bullied for being Jewish, were no longer in charge of their own house”. The situation deteriorated and when a visa for Uruguay became available he decided to leave Germany to escape further repression. In June 1937 he resigned from the shoe factory and sailed on the steamship “Groix” from Hamburg to Montevideo on 3rd June.



In Montevideo Ludwig changed his first name to Luis. Finding work was difficult. It was impossible to find an equivalent position.

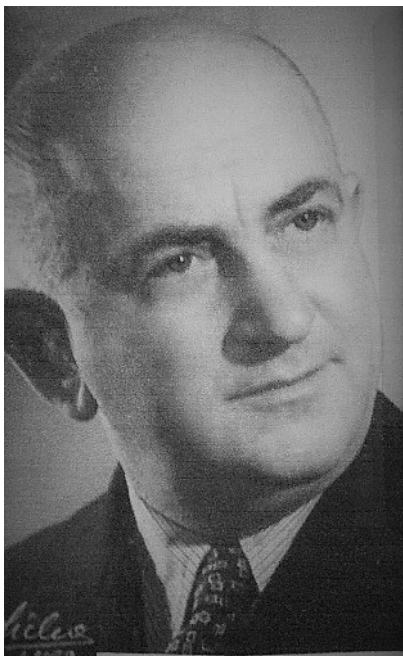
From April 1938 till June 1942 he worked at E. Frankfurter in Montevideo.

In July 1942 he found work at an import company. In April 1951 the wool department was closed and Ludwig made redundant.

He couldn't find new employment. At the age of 52 he ended working life and received a very meagre pension. His living accommodation consisted of a single room. Added to that he was sickly and suffered from the climate. All in all a very difficult situation.

In the 1950s, Luis fought with the reparations office in Wiesbaden for compensation for his pension contributions in Germany.

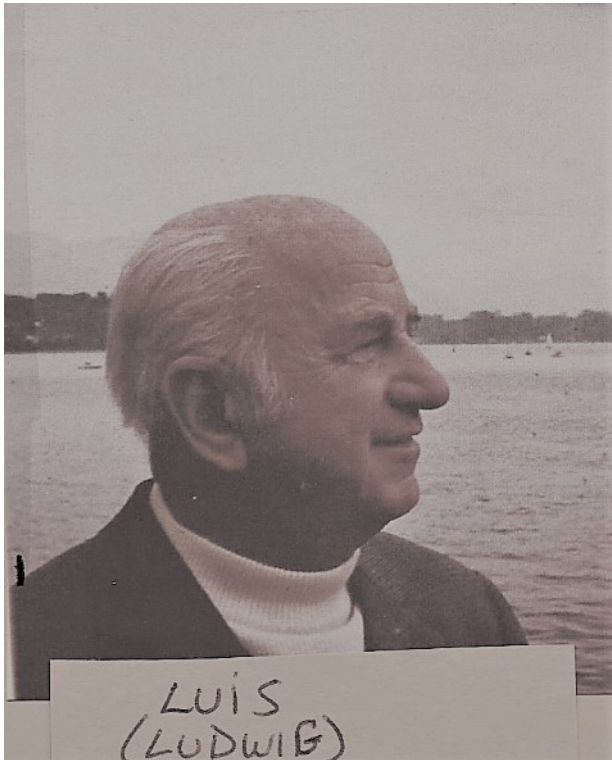
In April 1966 he left Montevideo and returned to Germany. He moved to Marburger Straße 6a., Mannheim-Waldhof. He was a member of the Jewish community in Mannheim. He died on 19th June 1981 and is buried in the Jewish cemetery in Mannheim.



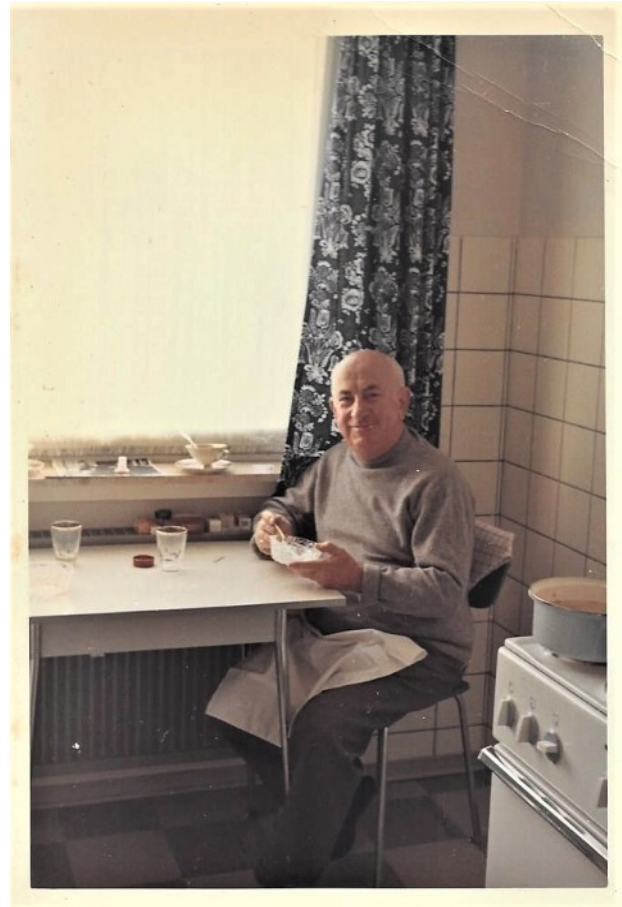
Ludwig 1948



Ludwig, Gertrud and Hugo 1970



Ludwig Friedmann 1975



3. When You Were Little

Excerpt from a memoir by Werner Friedmann.

My memories of Frankfurt are fleeting, but several things do come through. We lived in an Apartment house on Robert-Koch-Strasse. I remember an older boy who lived above us. I sometimes played with him but he was in the Hitler Youth and our friendship did not last long. There also was a boy whose name I can't remember. His uncle was Josef Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister. As I remember, he was a nice boy, but he would say "Heil Hitler!" when he came into our house. My mother prevailed upon him not to do that, but he was welcome in our house and once he bought me my first piece of chewing gum, from a machine. Funny, the things you remember.

I can remember the Zeppelins flying over our house. When I heard their motors, I would run out onto our little balcony to watch the beautiful, huge silver cylinders pass slowly over us. Since we lived near the *Flugplatz*, one day Aunt Eugenie and her husband picked us up to see the Hindenburg being drawn from the huge hangar. She was about to depart on her final flight to the U.S.

I started school in Frankfurt in 1938. It's funny but I can remember the trolley ride better than the school. With a special student pass and a trolley transfer at the *Bahnhofplatz* (railway station square) I traveled alone. Vaguely, my memory of learning the sharply angular old German script is the only vestige of that school. After a short time we left Germany.

The train trip from Frankfurt to Antwerp, Belgium, was made at night. As a child, I had no clue to the desperation of that flight. We left our apartment with everything in it. My parents packed only the barest necessities. My only recollection is being awakened at the border crossing as the Gestapo inspected my parents' papers and passports. Upon arrival in Antwerp, we checked into a hotel, where there were bellhops who looked and sounded like the old familiar Philip Morris cigarette commercial ("cawll for Philip Morreeees").

The SS Pennland was a huge adventure for me. She wasn't very large by today's standards but to a small boy she was a marvel to explore. The children's playroom contained a wonderful rocking horse among the many toys. I spent hours rocking and rolling on that horse. Every afternoon a boy named Claus and I were hired to be the Public Address system for the ship. For the reward of one Franc each, we raced through all the ship's passageways shouting, "Horse race on deck, horse race on deck". These were my first English words. When the races began, it would not take long for us to lose back our Francs, as we wagered on the outcome of the dice-controlled horse races. To this day, the horse races aboard cruise ships are the same, and so is the end result.

During the voyage there was a frantic search of our cabin for my mother's diamond. It had fallen out of the setting of her ring. I think a cabin steward found it in the carpet of our cabin. Mother was constantly seasick. Every morning she would bravely come to the dining room for breakfast. Our table was directly under a porthole. They were open most of the time, providing us with the only air conditioning that the ship had. Since the porthole was hinged at the top, in its open position it reflected the wake of the ship as it rushed past the hull. Its hypnotic attraction was too much for Mom. No matter how hard she tried, her eyes were inexorably drawn to the reflection, and in short order she would make a rush for the stairs. She ate a lot of meals in a deck chair. Pop and I were good sailors and my sweetest memory is of puffed rice dry cereal.

My most traumatic event of the voyage occurred in the "swimming pool". Our swimming pool was a heavy tarpaulin draped into a cargo opening in the forward deck. Salt water was then pumped into the "Tarp" and two ladders were lowered into the water at opposite sides of the "Pool". I would climb down the ladder and splash in the water. I had not learned to swim yet. One day a gentleman swam up and offered to ride me across the pool on his back. My mother, a very good swimmer, used to do this with me, so I hopped aboard with no hesitation. When he surface dove I got my first taste of salt water. It scared the hell out of me. Mom never did that. I believe that incident kept me from learning to swim until I was a teenager. To this day I'm not a good swimmer.

Of course the most memorable night was August 15th. We anchored in New York's upper bay, awaiting a dock assignment. There was unbelievable excitement aboard. The heat and humidity of the August night and the lack of air conditioning drove us out of our cabins. We spent most of the night marveling at the skyline and admiring the most beautiful lady in the world, the Statue of Liberty.

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