

*The Pollak Family*

*of*

*Pressburg, Hungary  
and Vienna, Austria*

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## The Pollak Family of Pressburg , Hungary (Bratislava, Slovakia) and Vienna, Austria

The earliest Pollak ancestor we know of is **Eduard Pollak** (1817-7 Aug 1888). His wife was **Katharina Ratzersdorfer** (1819-8 Apr 1891). The record of his death describes him as a business manager from Pressburg, Hungary. Sometime before 1848, Eduard and Katharina moved to Vienna, where they had five children: **Moritz, Wilhelm, Ignaz, Heinrich, and Flora**. In Vienna, Eduard was a stockbroker or bank agent on the Vienna Bourse. He had many connections with the elite and the theater world in Vienna, largely through his profession. According to his son Heinrich, Eduard had a regular afternoon card party with some of these connections. According to grandson Henry Stern, Eduard bought on the margin and was very well-to-do, but stingy. After a meal, the silver was immediately put away. He remained thin all his life, wore a smoking jacket or morning coat for thirty years. He lost everything when the stock market crashed in 1873, but he still had enough. Eduard died 7 Aug 1888 in Vienna and is buried in the Central cemetery: Tor 1, Group 8, Row 14, Grave 68. Katharina died in 8 Apr 1891 in Vienna and is also buried in the Central cemetery Tor I, Group 19, Row 4, Grave 25. At the time of her death she was living in Hernals at Gürtelstrasse 7. She is described as a Stockbroker's widow from Pressburg, Hungary. Eduard's profession is given in his son Heinrich's autobiography, *Bis ins Burgtheater*. Additional information is from the Vienna Jewish Community Records on the website [www.genteam.at](http://www.genteam.at) .

1. **Moritz Pollak** (7 April 1848-4 Aug 1849) Moritz died in Leopoldstadt shortly after his first birthday. He is buried in the Währing Jewish Cemetery in Vienna.
2. **Wilhelm Pollak** (7 Jan 1851-27 Oct 1930) Wilhelm became a physician and appears as Benjamin Wilhelm in the list of medical students in Vienna, available on the website listed above. On 29 April 1888, he married **Mathilde Sonnenschein** in Linz, Austria. According to the family, Wilhelm's medical specialty was dermatology. He lived in Bad Hall or Bad Gastein, where royalty and lesser royalty would come for the cure and to be treated for venereal diseases contracted from "East Indian" mistresses. At the time, the only treatment was mercury paste and iodine, smeared on the chest. Dr. Pollak was always paid for this treatment with a bag of gold ducats. Wilhelm's death notice states that "His life was indefatigably dedicated to lessening the sufferings of mankind." The Shiva was held at 3 p.m. in the Hall of the Jewish Cemetery in Linz. Wilhelm and Mathilde had two sons, **Eduard** and **Marcell Rene**. According to Aunt Elfi Stern, the two sons were sent to military school, and they complained about the bedbugs there. They were also extravagant and carried a dog with them.



Tante Mathilde Ostend 1931

**Markus Eduard Pollak** b 3 Feb 1889 in Vienna, Austria. Eduard, as he was called by the family, along with his brother Marcel Rene are listed in the Antwerp Police immigration index as entering Antwerp sometime between 1901 and 1915. Eduard is listed as Edward Pollak on page 90 of the index. Eduard's passport number is 144369. On 11 May 1918, according to the Viennese Jewish Community records Markus Eduard changed his surname from Pollak to Pollac-Perten. He married **Marie Barbe Lambertine Josephina Mathieu**. Sometime after that he and Marie entered Antwerp, Belgium. On 6 April 1927 he changed his surname again, this time to Perten-Polignac and he and Marie are again listed in the immigration index 1916-1930. Since the index is alphabetical, his visit after 1918 is listed on page 2441 and the visit after 1927 is listed on page 2366.

**Marcell Rene Pollak** b 9 Dec 1892 in Vienna, Austria. Marcel, whose passport number is 153755, accompanied his brother Eduard to Antwerp sometime between 1901 and 1915. He married **Rosalia Peeters**, and they had three children: **Gaston William Louis** born in Paris, France on 27 May 1923, **Roger Bernard** born in Antwerp on 15 May 1927, and **Marietta Mathilde Elisabeth** born in Antwerp on 17 Dec 1929. This information is taken from page 2442 of the Immigration index above. Since Marietta's birth is listed, it is assumed that this last entry took place in 1930. It may be related to the family returning from Linz when they attended the funeral of Dr. Wilhelm Pollak, but this is only a guess. The family surname is given as Polac in the death notice of Dr. Wilhelm Pollak.

In June of 1931, Mathilde sent photo postcards to the Sterns from a trip to Ostend, Belgium which she made with her two sons.



Tante Mathilde Pollak and her son Edi  
(Markus Eduard Perten-Polignac)



Tante Mathilde and her son Marcell Rene Polac

3. **Ignaz (Ignatz) Pollak** (born 23 Dec 1852). On 23 Oct 1888 in Vienna, he married **Emilie (Emma) Schütz**, daughter of **Moritz Schütz** and **Rosi Meitner**. Emma was born in Gross Tapolcany, Hungary on 16 Jul 1864. Ignatz and Emma lived at 2 Veresing #36 in Vienna. They had four children: **Eduard**, **Katharina (Käthe)**, **Oscar** and **Hedwig (Mimi)**. Ignaz was in the clothing business.

**Eduard Pollak** born 18 Aug 1889 in Vienna. According to Jewish Community records of Vienna, on 20 Aug 1939, Eduard was sent to a forced work camp in Nisko, Russia for three months. No further information

**Katharina (Käthe) Pollak** (18 May 1891-25 July 1978) Käthe was born in Vienna. On 28 June 1934, Käthe Pollak resigned her religion. She then lived in Bezirk 13 of Vienna at 100 Berghardenger Strasse. The Jewish Community records of Vienna also give a resignation date of 2 October 1934 and list Käthe as Katharina Pollak Reinhold. This suggests that between June and October, she married Mr. Reinhold, although I have not found a record of the marriage. According to a family member, Käthe had a son who lived to be 9 years old. The same family member thought that Käthe and her husband divorced. Käthe is next shown as arriving in New York City on 15 June 1960 on the ship *Guilio Cesare*. She boarded the ship in Gibraltar. Her Alien registration number was 12247677. Her Social Security card 052-36-986 was issued in New York 1961-62. She and her sister Mimi (Hedwig) visited their cousins, Edi Stern and Charlotte Stern Perry in Florida in the 60s, on their way to Israel. Lotte gave them a sewing machine at one time. Uncle Henry Stern knew them, but he was not on particularly good terms with them. In Israel, Käthe lived at Jael St. 12/2 in Haifa. Her last known address given in the Social Security Death Index was that of the U.S. Consulate in Tel Aviv, Israel, but Jewish Community Records of Vienna give her place of death as Haifa, Israel.

**Oscar Pollak** born 31 Jan 1895 in Vienna. No further information

**Hedwig (Mimi) Pollak** (24 June 1896-Nov 1978) Hedwig was born in Vienna. She worked as a maker of tapestry. In 1939 she lived at 22 Farm Avenue in Hendon Borough, Middlesex England where she worked as a domestic for Benjamin Cash a master milliner and his wife Doris. In October 1940, a list of United Kingdom World War II internees shows her working as a domestic for Mrs. Cash at 19 Harman Drive NW 2. Her registration number was 12247678. On 15 June 1960 Hedwig arrived in New York City on the ship *Guilio Cesare*, having boarded the ship with her sister in Gibraltar. Her nationality is listed as British. Her Social Security card, 566-60-8399 was issued in California in 1960. She visited cousins Edi Stern and Charlotte Perry in Florida with her sister Käthe, before moving to Israel. She probably lived with her sister in Haifa. The Social Security Death Index shows her last known address as the U.S. consulate in Tel Aviv, but it is likely that she also died in Haifa. Hedwig never married.



Left to right: Charlotte Stern Perry, Käthe Pollak Reinhold, Edward Stern, Bronka Klein Stern, Mimi (Hedwig) Pollak.

Photo taken by Charlotte Perry's brother, D. Daniel Stern, in Hollywood, Florida probably 1963.

4. **Heinrich Pollak (Prechtler)** (25 Jan 1857-24 Aug 1917) Heinrich was fascinated by the theater while he was still in his teens. In his autobiography, *Bis ins Burgtheater*, he confesses that during his last semester at the Academic Gymnasium in Vienna, when he was 17 years old, he and a classmate spent most of their time at the Niklas theater school, held in the Sulkosky theater on Matzleinsdorfer Street. Even when Heinrich was in class, he was studying his part in a play, hiding it inside a regular textbook. When they received their predictably poor report cards, the two young men decided they dared not show them to their parents. They managed to get an engagement at a summer theater in Bavaria from a theater agent. The contract provided a monthly income, travel money, and an advance. Telling their parents that they were going swimming on the Danube, they boarded the train for Krummau at 6 a.m. When they met the formidable director of the summer theater, however, they realized they were too inexperienced to fulfill the contract and they returned home.

Heinrich's father repaid the travel money, the advance and the penalty for breaking the contract. His mother cried for weeks, considering her son as "lost," and cousins ridiculed him, but he remained committed to being an actor and was pleasantly surprised when his father, who was secretly amused by the escapade, arranged for him to attend the theater school run by the Royal Court actor Franz Kierschner. After a few months, however, the school closed when Kierschner absconded to America to avoid his creditors. The students immediately enrolled with the rival Residenztheater Academy run by Edward Kierschner, rival and brother of the absconder. Heinrich soon tired of lessons and asked advice from his friend and agent Drahtschmied who sent him to Temesvar (Western Romania) where Heinrich was in a play every day and each day in a different role, gaining much valuable acting experience.

Because his parents opposed this adventure, he had run away again, but in the Spring, he was back in Vienna. All was forgiven. He was now a comedian when he returned to the Residenztheater. Through his father's connections, Heinrich met and was hired by Gallmeyer when she was becoming director of the Strampf theater. She warned him that her theater's purpose was to bring laughter, so they did only small lyric plays, parodies, and operettas. The theater only lasted three months. Heinrich next was a student of Alexander Strakosh, and it was through him that he auditioned for Laube when the Laube Stadttheater reopened. Heinrich was offered a yearly salary of a thousand Gulden. He played in Sophocles' *Antigone* and was the student in Goethe's *Faust*. With the Laube company, Heinrich traveled to Budapest for a multi-week visit which was sold out every night. Though he greatly respected Laube, Heinrich once more became unsatisfied and restless, and asked for a dismissal. His former teacher Strakosch telegraphed a colleague in Hamburg, and two days later Heinrich signed a contract in Hamburg to play the parts of the modest lover and comic for Pollini's Vereinigten Stadttheater in Hamburg and Altona. When Heinrich's military duty sent him back to Vienna for a few months, he lost the position in Hamburg, so he stayed in Vienna and became a comic in the operetta in the Theater an Der Wien.

In the fall he left for Berlin, where he obtained an engagement in the National Theater, but the volatile temperament of the director gave him nightmares, and he was thankful that his request to a friend's father, Dr. August Forster, was accepted. Heinrich now moved to Leipzig to act at the Leipzig Stadttheater. The only problem was that he was still required to perform in operettas and to sing. To escape the hated operetta, he returned to Berlin, this time to the Belle-Alliance theater where he worked as an actor "and performed the classics—my heart's desire." Some of his roles were Ferdinand in *Cabal in Love*, *Don Carlos*, and in between the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. At the end of the year he moved to Breslau, where for two years he served at the Stadttheater as the primary juvenile hero and was also the bon vivant. Carlos, Romeo, Melchthal in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, Mortimer, Karl Moor, Mark Anthony, Manfred: "in short, I enjoyed for two years, for the first time, all the pleasures of a favorite."

Despite his youth, Heinrich was a desired actor in his field. One day Edmund Kreibig, the director of the Prague German Theater appeared at Heinrich's door, offering him a three-year contract beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>. When Heinrich asked about a written contract, Kreibig insisted that a handshake was all that was necessary and left. A few days later Heinrich received an offer from the Royal Theater in Berlin and signed a contract for a three-time guest appearance in the Royal Theater in Berlin.



Heinrich in Prague

There he played Ferdinand in *Kabale und Liebe*, Romeo and some comedy parts, but one evening, the general director informed him that Director Kreibig had told him that Heinrich was already obligated to the theater in Prague. When Heinrich confirmed that he had shaken hands with Kreibig, he knew that he had to leave for Prague.

On 1 September 1883, in Berlin, Heinrich married Ferdinande Schmittlein, whom he had met during his two years at the Breslau Stadt theater, where Ferdinande was the ingenue. Ferdinande was born in Mainz, Germany on 26 March 1854, the daughter of Ferdinand Schmittlein and Franziska Johanna Josepha Lieber.

Ferdinande made her debut in 1874 in Königsberg where she acted for five years. Her first important role was as Puck in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. On 16 August 1874 her son Leopold Albert Ferdinand Schmittlein was born in Potsdam, Germany.



From 1880-1882 Ferdinande was engaged by the Breslau Stadt theater where she met Heinrich. Because married couples in the theater were often exploited by directors so that their pay was decreased, Heinrich and Ferdinande managed a long-distance marriage for many years as they pursued their careers. Shortly after their marriage, Heinrich went to Prague to fulfill his contract while Ferdinande was engaged by the Hoftheater in Weimar. Reflecting on this situation Heinrich wrote in *Bis ins Burgtheater*, "We were both young, full of hope, each with obligations for family members. So we both took on, individually, bravely the battle for life, and marched into the unknown, into life. We worked, enjoyed our individual theatrical successes, communicated to each other honestly, and were pleased with each other's success."

Heinrich stayed in Prague for six years where he made artistic progress and had success. When a new theater opened there, he played Major Tellheim in *Minna von Barnhelm*, the second night's performance following the opening night's opera *Die Meistersinger*. After successful guest performances of Rustan in *Dream of Life*, Don Caesar in *Bride of Messina*, Mortimer and Melchtal at the Royal theater in Dresden, he was engaged by that theater in 1888. He noted that this theater played all the classics as well as the German farces and comedies, but that no contemporary plays were performed. As always, he was drawn to Berlin, and spent all his free time attending performances put on by the Actors Association of German Theater. He also renewed friendships with former colleagues, including Joseph Kainz, now the director. When a vacancy occurred in the company, Kainz hired Heinrich to fill it. Now he was geographically close enough to Ferdinande that he could visit her on his free days.

After seeing the natural, unaffected performance art of Ferdinande in Weimar in Paul Heyse's *Princess Sacha*, Dr. Paul Schlenther, the theater critic from Berlin and his colleague,



Professor Erich Schmitt did all they could to transfer Frau Schmittlein to Berlin. Ferdinande received a letter from the director Adolf L'Arronge saying he had decided to engage her and she should enter into negotiations through a confidante. Heinrich and Ferdinande were overjoyed at the prospect of being together in Berlin, but when Heinrich appeared to negotiate, the proposal was not enticing, as the theater expected Ferdinande to take a large cut in salary, since Heinrich was already employed there. So, "we buried once again the hope for a homely pleasure, for an organized, common household."

About this time, Otto Brahm, a director who espoused the naturalistic manner of presentation, opened the Free Stage where he attempted to present contemporary plays such as those by Henrik Ibsen and Hermann Sudermann. The plays were often closed by the censors. Brahm was opposed in these efforts by the director Oscar Blumenthal. When Suderman's *Sodom's End* was prohibited in Berlin, Herr Amberg, director of the German theater in New York (later the Irving Theater) obtained the rights for the play, and Heinrich was offered the role of Willi Janikoff. Heinrich sailed for New York in February 1891 and spent three months there, playing Oswald in Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Robert in Suderman's *Honor*, Arnold in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, and roles in *Der Verschwender* by Ferdinand Raimund, and *Der Kriegsplan* by Julius Werther among other roles.

Returning to Berlin, Heinrich joined the Lessing Theater, directed at the time by Oskar Blumenthal. One of his roles there was the parson Hefterding in Suderman's *Homeland*. He also played Count Neipberg in more than 200 performances of *Madame Sans Gene*. When Director Blumenthal arranged a guest appearance of the Lessing Theater in Moscow, Heinrich was overjoyed that he would not be playing the Count. Among the plays presented in Moscow were *Sodom's End*, *Homeland*, *Honor* all by Suderman; *Great City Air*, *Second Face*, *Wallflower*, *The Test Arrow* all by Blumenthal; and French and English works which had their first German performance in the Lessing Theater. In all these pieces, Heinrich was cast in the main roles. After a bit of a hassle obtaining a passport for Russia, the guest performance went very well. While there, Heinrich became acquainted with the son of Nikolai Tolstoy.

Meanwhile, Otto Brahm, the director of the Free Stage was so successful in producing Gerhart Hauptman's plays that he soon found financial backers who enabled him to take up the directorship of the German Theater from Adolf L'Arronge. Brahm had seen Ferdinande in several roles at the Hoftheater in Weimar, and when he began his new directorship, in 1894, one of the first actors he engaged was Ferdinande, offering her a firm two-year contract. Ferdinande accepted, and she and Heinrich were delighted to finally, after 11 years of marriage, be able to set up a household together in Berlin. Ferdinande's debut in this theater as Dorine in Moliere's *Tartuffe* was highly praised. She also appeared as Toinette in *The Imaginary Invalid*, and Arsinoe in *The Misanthrope*.

Hirschfeld's *The Mothers* brought Ferdinande her first great success as a mother portrayer, and her many successes in the portrayal of various character roles confirmed her artistic position in Berlin. These two enjoyable years together passed all too quickly.



When Oskar Blumenthal came to renew Heinrich's contract, he also wanted to engage Ferdinande, whose contract with Blumenthal's competitor was ending. He considered the two offers a package deal. But Heinrich felt that the repertoire of the Lessing Theater was not favorable to Ferdinande's development as an actress, and he rejected the proposal.

Director Otto Brahm played at the same game, offering Heinrich a very small salary at his theater, thinking he would accept in order to remain with Ferdinande. They also rejected this offer, which they considered insulting.

Fortunately, while these negotiations were going on, a Mr. Mueller, secretary of the Vienna Deutsches Volkstheater appeared, making them both an equal offer. Since they both yearned for Vienna, which they had visited annually to see parents and relatives, they took this offer and relocated there. In September 1896 they appeared together in Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*. Ferdinande was Lona Hessel and Heinrich played John Tønnesen. While performing in various roles, they also urged the Volkstheater Association to include Hauptmann's *Biberpelz* (The Beaver Coat) in the repertoire, but the association felt modern works would not bring enough revenue to the theater, and they resisted. Finally, on April 18, 1897, the piece was performed with Ferdinande as Frau Wolff. It was scheduled for only one performance, but it became a draw and had to be held over several times.

In 1898, both Heinrich and Ferdinande were engaged by the K.K. (Royal) Hofburgtheater in Vienna. In 1902, Ferdinande received the honor of being appointed to the position of Hofburgschauspielerin (Royal Court Theater Actress) in recognition of her services.

A list of some of the plays in which Heinrich and Ferdinande appeared will be given below. The photo on the right of Ferdinande as Frau Wolff in *der Biberpelz* was taken in 1906. It is from the Dankelovsky Collection in the Hofrat.



Parlor of the Villa where Heinrich and Ferdinande lived in Vienna



In 1914, Heinrich wrote and published *Bis ins Burgtheater*, a memoir relating his experiences in theater, beginning as a teenager. It is historically valuable for its portrayal of directors, actors, actresses in the world of German Theater in the 1880-1900s, and it has been cited in several dissertations on the subject.

Ferdinande died on 14 July 1915. Heinrich was deeply grieved, as they had enjoyed a very happy marriage. He became depressed, withdrew from community life, and sold their villa on Ludwigsstrasse. He suffered from agonizing insomnia. Hoping that the mountain scenery, fresh air, and “waters” of Bad Hofgastein would lift his spirits, he visited there, where he died on 24 August 1917 from an overdose of veronal taken for insomnia.

List of some plays in which Heinrich Prechtler performed at the Hofburg Theater in Vienna.

<b>1899</b>	<b>Playwright</b>	<b>Role</b>
<i>Der Traum ein Leben</i>	Grillparzer	Könige Kämmerer
<i>Der Sohn der Wildnis</i>	Halm	Lykon
<i>Hamlet</i>	Shakespeare	Guildenstern
<b>1902</b>		
<i>Die Journalisten</i>	G. Freytag	Körner
<i>Die Räuben</i>	Schiller	Ratzman
<i>Der Veilchen Fresser</i>	Moses	von Golewski
<i>Götz von Berlichingen</i>	Goethe	Sievers
<b>31 Dec 1913</b>		
<i>Der Verschwender</i>	F. Raimund	von Walter

**24 Jan 1914**

*Wallenstein's Lager*

**Playwright**

Schiller

**Role**

Arkebusier

**10 Dec 1914**

*Die Hermannschlacht*

Kleist

Romische Feldherren-Muratori

[I copied this information from a reference work *Burgtheater 1776-1976* when we visited Vienna in 1997. There were many more plays listed for both Heinrich and Ferdinande, but I lacked the time to find and copy them].



On page 899 of Ludwig Eisenberg's *Grosses Biographisches Lexicon der Deutschen Bühne im 1900s*:

"Prechtler always achieved a strong effect through his unobtrusive yet extremely lively play, as well as the emotional expression that goes to the heart."

In the obituary published in the *Neues Wiener Journal* on 26 Aug 1917, the author notes that Prechtler showed his characteristic talent in "Episodenrollen." The article also stated that he and Ferdinande had lived in a very happy marriage, and her death deeply affected him.



### **Ferdinande Schmittlein**

Without training and without a teacher, Ferdinande began her acting career in 1874 in Königsberg, Prussia. Although she was born in Mainz-Kastel, Hesse, we surmise that she may have been living in Berlin for a few years, perhaps attached to the court there in some fashion, since her son Leopold Alfred Schmittlein (16 Aug 1874-Feb 1953) was born in Potsdam. By the time Leo was 19 years old, he had immigrated to the United

States. He was naturalized in 1900 and lived in Cleveland, Ohio, where he worked as a chef. On 16 August 1897, he married Mary Welsh (15 November 1876-7 May 1950). Their son Clyde A. Schmittlein, (7 Jun 1898-2 Oct 1971) worked as a bookkeeper for the Municipal Safety Department. Clyde married Margaret Marie McNamara (4 Dec 1906-28 March 1962) in Michigan on 3 Oct 1942. They had two children: a daughter who is still living, and a son Patrick Clyde Schmittlein (20 Oct 1948-28 Sep 2017) and lived in Cleveland. One family story is that Aunt Lotte (Charlotte Stern Perry), after she immigrated to the United States, learned where Leo was living and that they met. Ferdinande left a bequest to Leo in her will which is preserved in the Wien Stadt Archive. Attached to Ferdinande's will are comments about the difficulty of correspondence during wartime. Leo had to prove his birth or baptism and was having difficulty getting a response from Germany. He was finally successful, but whether he ever received his inheritance is unknown.

After 5 years in Königsberg, Ferdinande transferred to the Breslau Stadt Theater where she performed for two years (1880-1882). From Breslau, after her marriage in 1883, Ferdinande moved to the Hoftheater in Weimar. During her engagement there, on 12 February 1889 she played Bolette Wangel in the very first production of Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*. The playwright visited Weimar and attended the play's final performance on 14 March 1889. From page 898 of the Lexicon on German Theater: In Weimar, Ferdinande Schmittlein found a rich field for her artistic activity, and during her engagement there (1883-1893) she perfected herself more and more in the speciality of female character roles, which from then on remained her domain. Already at that time, her performances left behind a deep impression and were described by authoritative sources as outstanding stage performances.

In 1893 she was invited to the Berlin Deutsches Theater where she introduced herself brilliantly as Dorine in *Tartuffe* and where in role after role she gained a firm foothold in the public favor. During her three years of performing there, she produced a succession of valuable dramatic characters. Everyone appreciated her splendid humor, her rich and distinctive facial expressions, her easy and natural way of speaking, her great naturalness, her vivacious expressiveness; in short, she was described as a valuable asset for the German Theater.

In 1896 she moved with her husband to the Deutsche Volkstheater in Vienna, debuting as Lona Hessel in Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*. [Her husband played the role of John Tönnesen]. It was there that the earlier high opinion of Ferdinande's artistic performance was confirmed. She showed herself to be a brilliant comic force in the role of an eloquent housekeeper in *The Blank Slate*, a role in which she found the opportunity to display anew her powerful talent for creating character. What a significant actress Vienna had won in her, however, she proved as Frau Frei in *Die Mütter* where her impressive acting artistry stormed everyone's heart with compelling force. But also as Albine in *Bartel Turaser*, as Hanne in *Wie die Alten Sungen*, and foremost as the washerwoman Frau Wolf in *Biberpelz (The Beaver Coat)* she was able to prove her greatness. In 1899 she left the association of the Volkstheater and became a member of the Hofburg theater. The sphere of her roles was not so large, yet as always in art, it is how things are done. So, one can say about Schmittlein, the praiseworthy words which director Catalani said about the opera singer Sontag, "She was great in her genre, but her genre is small."

One critic wrote that at the Hofburg Theater, Ferdinande was rather under-employed and her talent was not always appropriately cast, yet despite those conditions, she achieved

significant successes. In 1902, Schmittlein, who enjoyed an excellent reputation in the entire German theater world, was named a Royal Court actress in recognition of her services.

Another critic considered the following to be her main roles in addition to those mentioned above:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Play</b>	<b>Playwright</b>
Rosa	<i>Der Verschwender</i>	F. Raimund
Dorine	<i>Tartuffe</i>	Moliere
Claudia	<i>Emilia Galotti</i>	G. E. Lessing
Lona Hessel	<i>Pillars of Society</i>	Henrik Ibsen
Betty	<i>Das Vermachtnis</i>	Arthur Schnitzler
Hanne	<i>Wie die Alten sungen</i>	K. Niemann
Claudio's mother	<i>Der Tor und der Tod</i>	H. von Hofmannsthal
Totenweibele	<i>Erde</i>	K. Schönherr
Die alte Wittichen	<i>Die versunkene Glocke</i>	G. Hauptmann
Rosina	<i>Kinder der Erde</i>	Thaddeus Rittner

List of some of the plays in which Ferdinande performed at the Hofburg Theater.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Play</b>	<b>Playwright</b>
9 May 1902	Mother Aase	<i>Peer Gynt</i> (at the Volkstheater)	Henrik Ibsen
1903	Sophie	<i>Der Erbförster</i>	Otto Ludwig
1 Apr 1903	Marzelline	<i>Marriage of Figaro</i>	Beaumarchais
14 Nov 1911	Anna Pawlowna	<i>Der Lebende Leichnam</i>	Leo Tolstoy
6 Mar 1912	Amme	<i>Gudrun</i>	Ernst Hardt
23 Jun 1912	Altes Weib	<i>Der Traum ein Leben</i>	Grillparzer
12 Dec 1912	Frau Ritter	<i>Das Märchen vom Wolf</i>	Molnar
1913	Sophie	<i>Krieg im Frieden</i>	Gustav v. Moser
1 Feb 1913	Hedwig Jensen	<i>The Lottery Man</i>	Rida Johnson Young
15 Mar 1913	Gina Ekdal	<i>The Wild Duck</i>	Henrik Ibsen
31 Dec 1913	Rosa	<i>Der Verschwender</i>	F. Raimund
14 Dec 1914	Alraune	<i>Die Hermannschlacht</i>	Heinrich v. Kleist
30 Jan 1915	Daja	<i>Nathan the Wise</i>	Lessing
June 1915	Rosina	<i>Kinder der Erde</i>	Thaddeus Rittner

As mentioned previously, many more plays were referenced, but I did not have time to copy them down when we visited Vienna in 1997.

5. **Flora Pollak** (26 Jun 1858-13 Aug 1942). On 9 February 1888 in Mattersdorf, Hungary (now Mattersburg, Burgenland, Austria) Flora married Wilhelm Stern (27 Apr 1862-5 Sep 1942). The Burgenland Marriage record indicates that Wilhelm's occupation was a Händler. Like his father before him he worked in the clothing business, dealing with fabrics, leather and fur. Flora and Wilhelm lived in the

Northwestern districts of Vienna, first in Währing, then in Hernals, and finally in Ottakring, where their address was Frauengasse 1. Kurt Stern, a grandson remembers, "On Saturdays we alternated visits to my grandparents with their visits to us. Since we observed at least some of the Jewish laws, riding was not permitted on the Sabbath, and we walked for one to two hours to get to my grandparents' house." Wilhelm was a Pfaidler (eine Art Hemdenmacher) a kind of shirtmaker. Kurt Stern remembers his grandfather being in the clothing business and as a result, Kurt received a lot of clothing through him, including a pair of "lederhosen" which Kurt had until 2000. Elfi Stern, a daughter-in-law, remembered Wilhelm as a kind, genial man who was fond of her. He told his son Henry that when he married Elfi, he had married a jewel, and that he should take good care of her. Kurt Stern also remembers his grandfather as a kind and quiet man. He recalls that his grandfather always ate the marrow from beef bones when boiled beef was prepared.

Elfi remembered her mother-in-law as a tiny, energetic, woman full of jokes. She once said that she had five children because that was the number of eggs she had. Kurt remembers his grandmother as a small, but strong woman, all skin and bones, who liked to be in charge of her household, and who completely dominated her easy-going husband. Elfi told us that one day when Flora started to pay the man who had delivered coal to the house, the delivery man said, "Your **son** already paid me." Since her sons were all at work, Flora was furious and told Elfi "that idiot is no longer delivering our coal." Another story was that a dog tore the mailman's pants and he couldn't complete his deliveries, so Flora gave him a pair of Wilhelm's pants. The mailman was several sizes smaller than Wilhelm and said he would feel ridiculous wearing them. Flora said, "You'd be more ridiculous with your underwear hanging out." The mailman took the pants. In February 1938 Wilhelm and Flora celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A small article with their photograph appeared in the newspaper announcing the event.



Wilhelm and Flora had five children, all born in Vienna: **Charlotte Stern** b 12 Jan 1889, **Eduard Stern** 22 Jul 1890, **Desider Stern** b 27 Jul 1893, **Gustav Stern** b 5 Sep 1898, and **Heinrich Stern** b 30 Dec 1902

Back row (left to right) Deszi Stern, Eduard Stern, Lotte Stern Birnbaum, Max Wilhelm Birnbaum, Gustav (Geza )Stern



Front Seated Row:  
Bronka Klein Stern holding Kurt Heinz Stern, Flora Pollak Stern, Wilhelm Stern, Heinrich Stern.

Probably taken 9 Feb 1928 on their 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

In 1939 Charlotte, Eduard, Desider, and Heinrich immigrated to the United States. In May 1940, Desi filed an affidavit with the American Consul on behalf of his parents. The United States, however, would not admit them because Wilhelm had been born in Hungary, and the Hungarian quota had been filled. Records from Yad Vashem show that Wilhelm was deported to Theresienstadt in Convoy 2, car 538 on 29 June 1942. Flora was deported to Theresienstadt in Convoy 6, car 39 on 29 July 1942. Flora died on 13 August 1942 and Wilhelm died about three weeks later, on 5 September 1942.

**Charlotte Stern (Lotte) Birnbaum (Perry)** (12 Jan 1889-2 Jun 1974)



Lotte was a seamstress and dressmaker. Before her marriage, she worked for her Aunt, Ferdinande Schmittlein (Pollak), and was a favorite of the actress. On 13 Mar 1919, Lotte married **Maximilian Fritz Wilhelm Birnbaum (William Perry)** b 1891-1892 d 13 Jul 1953. Max was born in Hanover, Germany, the son of Wilhelm Birnbaum and Anna Sofie Hettling. Max had a sister, Ina (Regina) Birnbaum, who married Eric Loewenstein (Layton). Lotte and Max lived in the Dornbach section of Vienna and rode motorcycles for transportation. They wore brown leather gauntlets, and we still have one pair. Max was a bookkeeper. Lotte and Max had two sons, but one was stillborn and the other lived only 8 days, having kidney and lung problems.

One infant weighed 14 lbs. (Perhaps Lotte was diabetic, or I misunderstood what she said.)

Kurt Stern remembers family gatherings on Sunday afternoons at the Birnbaum home in Dornbach, a suburb of Vienna in the country. "Since nobody owned a car, we took a streetcar to the end of the Dornbach line and then walked up a hill for nearly a mile to their house. Regulars in attendance included my grandparents, my grandfather's brother Martin, who had a large handlebar moustache, Uncle Edi, and often Uncle Henry, an ophthalmologist and his wife Elfi. The men played cards and drank beer, the women talked, and the children (there were some local boys also) went off to the nearby woods. After dinner we all went home."

The Birnbaums immigrated to the United States in 1939, sailing on the S.S. Zaandam from Rotterdam January 7 and arriving in New York on January 16. They were described as having fair complexions, brown eyes and hair. Max was 5'8" tall, and Lotte was 5'3". When they became U.S. citizens, they changed their surname to Perry. (Birnbaum translates to pear tree.) Max thereafter used William as his first name, and was known to Kurt Stern as Uncle Bill.



When the Birnbaums emigrated they listed Mrs. Ina Loewenstein, then living at 7122 Meade Street in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as the relative they were joining. Ina was Bill's sister who had married Eric C. Loewenstein. They later changed their name to Layton. They immigrated to the United States in 1911. Anna Sofie Birnbaum, Bill and Ina's mother came in 1927. Uncle Bill's religious background was mixed, as one of his parents was Lutheran, and it was



perhaps this connection which resulted in his finding employment as a janitor, according to one family source. His draft card shows that he worked in Pittsburgh as a custodian at a high school. Kurt Stern visited the Perrys in Pittsburgh on his travels to and from Michigan when he was in graduate school at Ann Arbor in 1949-1950.

The Perrys planned to retire to Florida with the Laytons, and a small house had been purchased in Hollywood, Florida. Bill's sister, Ina Layton, had already moved to Ft. Lauderdale. However, Bill died in 1955 before he and Lotte made their move. With no reason to stay in Pittsburgh, Lotte moved by herself to Hollywood, Florida and was joined there by her brother Eduard (Edi) when he retired. In the 1960s, Lotte's brother Deszi and his wife Bronka often spent the winter months with Lotte and Edi in Florida. Lotte was thrilled when her great niece Karen Rebekah Stern was born in 1962, and she knitted and crocheted many items of clothing for Karen, as well as crocheting a baby blanket for her. Karen and her parents Kurt and Faith visited Aunt Lotte in Florida in 1965. After Edi died in 1967, Lotte lived alone, corresponding with relatives and sometimes visiting those living on the East Coast. She was very frugal and enjoyed buying things on sale and shopping at thrift shops and flea markets. When her health began to fail, she moved to California near her brother Henry and his wife Elfi. Lotte died on 2 Jun 1974 in Sun City, California. She is buried in Perris Valley Cemetery Row 69 next to her sister-in-law's father, Siegfried Jagendorf. The cemetery is in Riverside County, California.

**Eduard (Edi) Stern** (22 Jul 1890-5 Jan 1967)



Edward Stern worked as a bank clerk and lived with his parents in Vienna until he immigrated to the United States in 1939, sailing on the S.S. Veendam from Antwerp on October 28 and arriving in New York on November 10. He stated that he was joining his sister Charlotte Birnbaum in Pittsburgh, PA, who was then living with the Loewensteins. Lotte had paid for his passage. Edi was described as having a fair complexion, brown eyes and hair, and being 5'4" tall. Edi never married. In the 1940s Uncle Edi worked as a clerk for Louis Lefkowitz & Brothers Inc.,

manufacturers of leather and leather specialties in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he was also the union representative. In 1940, his salary was \$13.50 per week. He lived at 268 Sandford Street in New Brunswick. When Eduard was naturalized on 7 Mar 1946 in New Brunswick, he changed his name to Edward Richard Stern. Almost every weekend Edi visited his brother Deszi and his family who lived in Newark, until he moved to Hollywood, Florida to live with his sister Lotte. Edi died there on 6 Jan 1967. He is buried in the Hollywood Memorial Gardens, Hollywood, Florida, Section 17, Lot 15.



*Edi, Karen, and Lotte in Hollywood, Florida 1965*

**Desider (Deszi) (D Daniel) Stern** (27 Jul 1893-2 Feb 1968)

When Desider was six years old, in 1899, he entered Class I in the Volksschule in Vienna, District 16. The School was located on Payergasse #18. Students were marked in application, religion, reading, language, arithmetic, natural history and philosophy, geography and history, writing, drawing, singing and gymnastics. Desider received the highest mark in all subjects except writing and drawing. At first his singing only received 2s, but he improved in that area after a year or two. Kurt, his son, has several report cards from this five-year school. When Deszi finished the Volksschule in 1904, he was to go to a Mittelschule. Desider next attended the Staats-Realschule in District 16. Required subjects were religion, German, French, English, geography, history, mathematics, natural history, chemistry, physics, geometry and geometric drawing, darstellende geometry, freehand drawing, gymnastics. The electives he chose were penmanship (schönschreiben), stenography, chemical laboratory practice, and clay modeling. He received the highest marks in both subject matter and application. In July 1911 after his final examination, he received a certificate stating that he was qualified to attend a Technical Hochschule (Technical University). Certificates from various examinations from 1911-1915 show him receiving excellent and very good marks in all the subjects he undertook. Only in the subject "Warenkunde and technische Mikroskopie" did he drop to satisfactory. On 24 June 1915 Desider received an engineering degree from the Polytechnic Institute of Vienna. (Technische Hochschule zu Wien).

During World War I, probably because he had this degree, he was assigned, as a military officer, to a munitions factory which turned out shell casings. Since the Central Powers were short of brass, church bells were collected from all over the empire to be melted down. Since the bells are made of bronze, not brass, they had to be melted down and separated into their constituent parts. Deszi's job was to sample and analyze these bells, which arrived by the trainload, and to work out chemical separation techniques. He used this work as the basis for his doctorate which he obtained after the war on 14 July 1920. Kurt still has his father's hand-written dissertation with many pages of flow charts. According to Aunt Elfi, while he was at the University, Deszi found time to play pool.



Deszi always wanted to be an independent businessman, and after the war he switched from metallurgy to producing chemicals for the shoe industry. This meant making adhesives and dyes by which a piece of leather becomes a shoe. Many of these materials were his own formulations, and Kurt also has several of the notebooks filled with these formulas. Since Austria, after the war, was reduced to a population of six million, the domestic shoe industry was rather small and so was Deszi's business. Kurt remembers visiting the place as a boy, smelling the industrial solvents and being allowed to make variously colored wax pencils, the size of candles, which were used to mark leather for cutting. The entire work force probably did not exceed half a dozen people. Nevertheless, the business provided a comfortable living for the two owners and their families. Deszi had a partner who handled the business details, while he took care of the technical side.



When Deszi's partner decided to marry, he asked Deszi to be his best man. The bride was from Bielitz, Poland, where the wedding was held. One of the bride's close friends was Bronka (Berta) Klein, who also attended the wedding. After they met at this wedding, Deszi and Bertha began a courtship, primarily through correspondence, since it was an overnight train ride between Bielitz and Vienna. Deszi and Bronka were married 6 September 1925 and went to Italy on their honeymoon. **Bronka (Bronislawa, Bronia, Bertha) Klein** (26 May 1900-29 March 1970) was the daughter of Herman Klein and Helene Kamholz Klein. More of her story can be found in the Klein Family History titled *The Klein Family of Tarnow*. Before her marriage, Bronka had worked as a secretary to a bank president in Bielitz. She was very good at financial matters, and after she married Deszi, she handled the financial part of his business, until he could afford a regular employee. (Working on a permanent basis was out of the question for middle

class women at that time in Vienna.)

Deszi and Bronka had two children: **Kurt Heinz Stern** b 26 Dec 1926 and **Eric Wolfgang Stern** (4 Nov 1930-12 Oct 2011). Kurt remembers living in a small fourth-floor apartment on Kreindlgasse. His primary memory from that time is of a neighbor, Mrs. Tramer, probably because she was a family friend while the Sterns lived in Vienna. In 1930 when Eric was born, the Sterns moved to a much more spacious apartment, Rudolfinergasse 8. It had a small room for their live-in maid. The apartment building had a long narrow front hall in which Eric and Kurt, when they were a little older, played soccer. More details about this family can be found in Kurt Stern's autobiography, *Biographical Notes*, written for his children and available on-line at the Holocaust Museum website.

The Stern family emigrated from Vienna to the United States in 1939, sailing on the S.S.

Saturnia from Genoa, Italy on 6 November 1939, arriving in New York on 17 November. They stated that they were joining Bronka's cousin Edward Cole who lived at 1051 Abbott Rd. in Palisades (Fort Lee), New Jersey. Both Deszi and Bronka were described as being 5'3" tall, having fair complexions, and brown hair and eyes. Kurt, then 12 years old was 5 feet tall, and Erich, 8 years old, was 4'3". The Stern family lived with the Coles for several months until Deszi found employment with A. J. and J.O. Pilar located on Chapel Street and Lister Avenue in Newark. This business was similar to his own business in Vienna, enabling him to make use of his formulas and processes involving leather and products for shoes. His salary in 1940 was \$4400 per year. The Sterns moved to 101 Broad Street in



Newark and later to 624 High Street. Bronka found work first at a Charms candy factory and later at Lorstan Photography Studio, where among other jobs, she added the color to "tinted" photographs. Deszi and Bronka became U.S. citizens on 20 May 1945. More remembered details about this family can be found in a later section on Kurt Stern. In the 1960s, after their sons had married, the Sterns moved to East Orange, New Jersey. Although he had a heart attack in (1963?) Deszi continued to smoke. By 1967 his health was failing, and he suffered from atherosclerosis as well as from urinary problems. Deszi and Bronka continued to spend winters in Hollywood, Florida, near Deszi's siblings, and it was there that Deszi died on 2 February 1968 while undergoing surgery for urinary blockage. Deszi is buried in Hollywood Memorial Gardens, next to his brother Edi. Bronka had surgery for breast cancer in 1965. Unfortunately, the cancer returned and metastasized into her lungs. She died in 1970 in Summit, New Jersey and is buried in the King David Cemetery in Clifton, New Jersey.

#### **Geza (Gustav) Stern** (5 Sep 1898-12 Dec 1942)

Gustav was a musician who played in nightclubs. He played both violin and piano by ear and, according to Elfi, was rather different from the rest of the somewhat Victorian Sterns. (According to another relative, he was quite a libertine.) When he eventually told his mother, Flora, that his gentele girlfriend, **Marie Swoboda**, was pregnant, Flora insisted that Gustav

marry Marie. Gustav contracted Swine Flu, which left him paralyzed, and he spent the last years of his life in a Jewish Community Home for incurables. His wife and **son** lived with Flora and Wilhelm for some time. Elfi Stern visited Gustav in the hospital, and said that he had a cheerful, interesting personality and twinkling eyes. The family considered his behavior scandalous and never liked to talk about him. According to another Stern relative, it was multiple sclerosis which led to Gustav's paralysis and which later led to his death. The same source also said that he married a protestant girl, but they later divorced. Yet another source said Gustav contracted syphilis. The Jewish Kultusgemeinde records in Vienna state that the circumstances of his death are not completely clear, but that he is buried in the newer part of the Jewish Cemetery in Vienna. (Section T4, Group: 018A, Row 24, Grave 42) His name is given as Gega Israel Stern.

**Heinrich (Henry) Stern** (30 Dec 1902-6 Mar 1989)

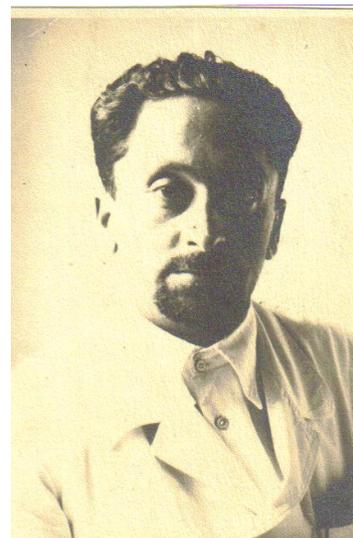


Henry remembered his Uncle Anton Stern sending him money when Henry was a child. Henry Stern graduated Medical School in Vienna with a specialty in ophthalmology. (In his first-year class in medical school was Emil Klein, brother of Bronka Klein who later married Henry's brother. Also in this class was Anna Neumann, who in 1962 became the pediatrician for Kurt Stern's children in Washington, D.C.)

On 15 Nov 1935, Henry married **Elfreda (Elfrieda) Jagendorf** (28 Dec 1909-20 Apr 2000). Henry's nephew, Eric Stern, was the ring bearer at the wedding. Elfi was born in Cernauti, Romania, the daughter of **Siegfried (Sami) Jagendorf** (1 Aug 1885-5 Sep 1970) and **Hilda (Hinde) Feller** (9 Feb 1888-10 Jan 1983). The Jagendorf family moved to Vienna after World War I. In 1946 they immigrated to the United States, moving to

California in 1948. Family information about the Jagendorfs can be found in the introduction and commentary section of *Jagendorf's Foundry*, a memoir of the Romanian Holocaust, written by Siegfried Jagendorf, published posthumously in 1991.

Elfi told this story about how she and Henry met. Clara, a relative of Elfi's opened a home for the elderly in Hutteldorf. She hired Dr. Ferdinand Lustig to oversee medical issues. He also became Elfi's doctor. Dr. and Mrs. Lustig always held an open house every Sunday for young people to gather. Dr. Lustig asked Elfi, "Why don't you get married?" Elfi did have a boyfriend who was a gentleman farmer, living near the city. He was tall and blonde but had a bad temper. To apologize he would send flowers to Elfi at the beauty parlor. He left Vienna for Argentina. Meanwhile, some family members along with the Lustigs went on an excursion to Lake Balaton in Hungary. Elfi did not go. Henry Stern happened to be at Lake Balaton. When Mrs. Lustig saw him there, she asked him, "Are you married? Would you like to be? I've got just the girl for you." She invited him to the open house. He was then a new doctor working in the City Hospital. When Henry



met Elfi at the open house he was interested in getting to know her better. At first, she wasn't interested, but he kept calling her. Then one day, she happened to meet Henry on the bus. He said, "It's wonderful to wait for you." Apparently, that statement appealed to her, and she became seriously interested. The Lustigs later moved to New York City where Dr. Lustig opened a practice. Elfi said that all four of the Lustigs died from cancer. Martin Stern, Henry's Uncle, had a girl picked out for Henry, and he was really angry at Elfi for catching Henry. Later when Martin and his wife Sidonie came to the United States, Elfi and Henry were very well acquainted with them.



Henry was very skilled as an ophthalmologist, even performing cataract surgery on his mother. Henry and Elfi immigrated to the United States in 1939, sailing on the S.S. Manhattan from Hamburg, Germany on January 17, 1939 and arriving in New York on January 26. They stated they were joining a cousin, Bernice Offenberg, who then lived at 10 Park Avenue, in New York City. Henry had \$88.00 and Elfi had \$70.00. They were both described as having fair complexions and brown eyes and hair. Henry was 5'3" tall and Elfi was 5'4". When Henry and Elfi came to the United States they called the Stern relatives: Adela Strauss and Valerie Rosenthal. At first, they denied being relatives, but they took Henry's phone number and later they called. Apparently, they were worried that, as refugees, Henry and Elfi might want something from them. Later when Henry opened his ophthalmology practice in

New York, they were quite pleased to be treated by him, gratis.

In the April 9, 1940 census, Henry and Elfi lived at 143R West 183<sup>rd</sup> St. in New York. Henry is listed as Heinrich and Elfi as El Friede. With them were two lodgers Leo and Kate Wirth who had also lived in Vienna in 1935. Henry's occupation was listed as a medical doctor at a clinic, but he was unemployed. Elfi worked as operator in the wholesale Ladies belt industry. Her salary was listed as \$480. Both Henry and Elfi had first papers towards citizenship.

Because Henry did not have the U.S. residency required for Board Certification, Henry and Elfi moved to Longview, Texas near Shreveport, Louisiana, where Henry was employed as an ophthalmologist by the Hurst Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital, owned by Dr. V. R. Hurst, the first eye, ear, nose and throat specialist in East Texas.

About 15 years ago, Henry's son Ralph took this photo of the building where Henry worked in Longview. The building was then vacant but retained the Clinic's sign. By 2016, the building had been converted to oil company offices.



Henry was also paid by a university in Longview to teach. The owner of the hospital thus got Henry's services for practically nothing. Henry and Elfi's son, **Ralph David Stern** was born 20 Jun 1943 in Longview, Texas.

Later Henry, Elfi, and Ralph moved to New York City, where Henry had a very successful practice in ophthalmology, with an office at 350 Central Park West. They first lived at 86 Haven Avenue, and then in the same building where Henry had his office. Elfi had an antique shop. While living in New York, Henry performed cataract surgery on his sister Lotte. Henry and Elfi also owned an apartment building in Vienna and visited there frequently. When Henry retired, the Sterns moved to Sun City, California, near Elfi's parents, the Jagendorfs. Henry was diagnosed with bladder cancer which later metastasized. He died 6 Mar 1989.



After Henry's death, Elfi moved to an apartment in Laguna Hills, California not far from San Diego, where Ralph was an attorney for the school system. In 1999, Elfi moved to Milbrae in the San Francisco area, where Ralph and his family then lived. Elfi died in her apartment on 20 April 2000 from a heart attack.

**The Next Generations:** Eduard and Katharina Pollak had 5 children. From these 5 children, there were 11 grandchildren who are listed above. From these 11 grandchildren there are only **six** great grandchildren:

**Three children of Marcell Rene Polac: Gaston Wiliam Louis Polac, Roger Bernard Polac, and Marietta Mathilde Elisabeth Polac.** We have no further information about them.

**Two children of Desider Stern: Kurt Stern** whose biographical notes are available online and his brother **Eric Stern**. Kurt Stern has a daughter and a son who are living, but there are no grandchildren. We include information about Eric Stern, his brother, who died in 2011.



**Erich Wolfgang Stern** (4 Nov 1930-12 Oct 2011) Eric, the second son of Bronia and Deszi, was named for the Viennese composer Eric Wolfgang Korngold. Eric was born in Vienna, Austria and immigrated to the United States with his parents and brother in November 1939. Like his brother, Eric also graduated from Barringer High School in New Jersey. He received his B.S. in chemistry from Syracuse University in 1951. After receiving his PhD degree in chemistry from Northwestern University in 1954, Eric worked as an organic chemist for M.W. Kellogg Company and later for Engelhard, where he was directory of chemotherapy research until he retired.

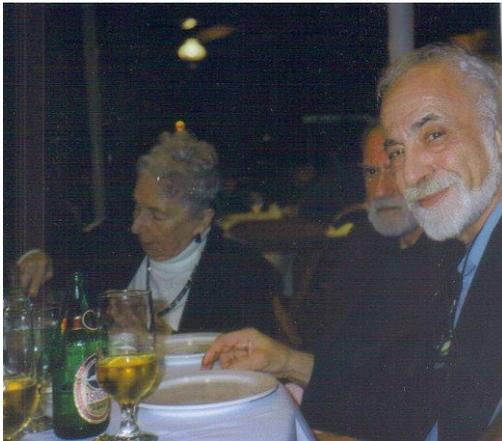
Eric has given many talks at National and International conferences. Numerous publications and several foreign and domestic patents resulted from his work. Some of these patents were for

the platinum-based anti-tumor agent, Cisplatin. After his retirement, Eric became an adjunct professor at Rutgers and Seton Hall Universities. He was an avid skier and rock climber and enjoyed writing. In the 1960s, several of his humorous articles on skiing was published in *Ski Magazine*. He also wrote several short stories and a novel. In 2011, *Blackberries*, a collection of these stories was edited by Faith Stern and published by Bielizna Press. Eric also enjoyed playing tennis and gardening. He and his wife Pat lived in Mountainside, New Jersey. In later years, Eric had COPD as well as heart problems. He died probably from a heart attack on 13 October 2011.

On 4 Nov 1960 he married **Patsy Adams Shaler** (3 Mar 1933-22 Apr 2010). Eric and Patsy had no children together, but Eric adopted Patsy's son Michael from her previous marriage to Don Shaler. Before her marriage, Pat worked for a radio station in Poughkeepsie, New York. She has also worked as a counselor/manager for a temporary employment agency, for a trucking firm, and for many years she did volunteer braille of textbooks and other reading materials for the State of New Jersey. She also taught this skill to others. Pat was a skilled tennis player and a gourmet cook. Pat developed COPD from smoking cigarettes and died 22 April 2010.



Pat and Eric November 1960



Left to Right: Elfi Stern, Kurt Stern, Eric Stern in California November 1999

**One child of Heinrich Stern: Ralph Stern** who is living. Ralph has two sons, and each son has two daughters.

