

## AN AMERICAN MASON IN GERMANY

*{Including a way to tour a Catholic Mason's personal Masonic Garden that of....Prinz Bischof Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim}*

### BACKGROUND:

While I was a Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Army, I was stationed in Germany. The first two years [1955-57] I assigned as Division Psychiatrist for the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and stationed in Wuerzburg.

The last year [1957-58] I was stationed at the 2d General Hospital in Landstuhl... [Where, currently, many of the servicemen who need further care from the war areas of Iraq and Afghanistan are treated before being returned stateside.]

The 10<sup>th</sup> Division is now in Afghanistan as the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. Landstuhl is located in western Germany near France and very near Ramstein Air Base by the Mosel River.

Two months after arriving in Germany the order came to change us from Occupation Forces to Friendly Forces. This carried with it the responsibility for us to become friends with the German people.

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In Wuerzburg several members of the division, officers and enlisted men, who were masons were interested in having a lodge for continuing in masonry. We visited the Masonic lodge in Wuerzburg and, through dialogue with friends and fellow masons in the German lodge, it was learned that it would be possible to establish a deputy American lodge to the German Grand Lodge by having 3 of our number become members of the German lodge and proceed from there.

Of the three who spoke good German, I was one. The American lodge was established as CORNERSTONE CLUB and met in the German lodge...[ I have a beer stein made over there with a pewter lid and on the side is a picture of the Marienberg;--Wuerzburg's castle across the Main River on the left bank across from the city of Wuerzburg.]

### Some Friendship Anecdotes:

Through the administrative features and the social patterns I came to be especially good friends with 3 of the German masons:

Hans-Peter Jensen [wife Reta, daughters Nora and Birgit] Walter  
Pobuda [wife Ulla, son Dieter and other children] Herbert  
Hantschel [wife Inga and children]

We learned that Walter and Herbert were architects and were the construction firm that had built the series where we were assigned quarters in the Skyline apartment buildings on the hill in Wuerzburg. They were near the small landing strip for the Division which was easily seen outside our bedroom window on the end of the building. The strip was located only a few blocks away from the 10<sup>th</sup>



Field Hospital for the US Army. Walter shared with us when the two families visited us in our apartment that they had heard that the Americans had round door knobs. In Europe they have door levers instead of the knobs. As a consequence, they had designed and had made for the apartments some round door knobs. BUT, they didn't turn !!, .....they were Push-Pull in function ! We had some friendly laughs about that. It took a little getting adjusting to them at first while living there. It was also necessary to post someone at the bathroom door when we had company because the light switch was outside the door and guests couldn't figure out how to open the door. Most of our friends lived where they had levers not knobs.

A later feature of the relationships with the Hantschels and Pobudas was that through our reference and the response of my sister in Denver the two families moved to citizenship in Colorado and USA.

When we were one year over there [I think it was when the Rhine froze over] it had been so cold that a 2-inch layer of hoar frost formed all over the upholstery inside our 1955 Chevrolet 210 VanDyke brown with cream-colored top. There was less of visiting each other. Ada, the wife of the Editor of the local newspaper MAIN POST, complained to Jacque that she hadn't seen much of visits from us. Jacque replied that there was so much that was cold and frozen. Ada responded, "War Telefon auch gefroren?" [Was the telephone also frozen?] (If you know or are learning a foreign language you know that one avoids phone conversations because it is often more difficult to understand that way.)

Hans-Peter and wife Reta became frequent visitors in our home and we in theirs, as well as with the Hantschels and Pobudas. Hans-Peter was professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Wuerzburg. Reta, also a physician on faculty was an anesthesiologist. Jacque was an Occupational Therapist and a stay at home mother. When we were together, we would speak German, they would speak English. We would serve to teach each other and correct in languages. Also we would exchange holidays, different social practices and, with others in groups in meetings as German-American discussion groups, (sponsored by the German-American Women's Club)—cooking groups, music groups, concerts [such as Mozartfest], community activities and meeting other prominent Wuerzburg citizens;—[including Professor of Violin/ owner of a very stylish dress shop, "Bindewald Modelle'7 Editor and wife of the Wuerzburg newspaper MAIN-POST / City Attorney / a doctor specializing in lung disorders]. For another experience, I was honored and chosen by the Jensens to be godfather to their new daughter, Birgit Christiane. This took place in a chapel at the University of Wuerzburg.

#### Developments and Experiences in the Cornerstone Lodge

Meetings at the lodge were weekdays on Mondays—two for Cornerstone and two for the German lodge. The lodge had one member who provided for the availability of snacks, meals, lodge meeting meals, and banquets [Table Lodge meetings]. This included wine, beer, and spirits in the lodge. [This is different from American style.] Two meetings were alternated to provide for one stated meeting a month for each lodge for lodge business and one informal for socializing, study, and dialogue. At one of these I gave a talk in German related to the white, pink, and red rose symbolism connected to the Saints John.



From another contrast from American masonry practices and patterns, I learned that Catholics and Masons can be one and the same. Hans-Peter, Walter, Herbert and their families are Catholic. I learned, also, that the Bishop of Wuerzburg, ADAM FRIEDRICH VON SEINSHEIM, was also a mason. His famous palace [the Residenz] is in the center of Wuerzburg. The Bishop's Residenz has art treasures inside and out. Inside there are famous ceiling and wall paintings by Tiepolo. The surrounding gardens outside are often a venue for the Mozartfest concerts. Besides this he has a summer palace in the little town of Veitshoechem a short way downstream on the River Main. This consists of a smaller palace building with an extensive, elaborate, Rokoko Garden;--which is also a Masonic Garden !

### The Masonic Garden of brother PrinzBischof Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim of Wuerzburg

The garden is well-cared-for in the Rococo style, including careful trimming of the trees and hedges and maintenance of the statues and fountains. As the Bishop designed it, it is divided into 4 zones, portraying Masonic symbolism in a way that reflects Masonic symbols and practices and patterns and ideas from the German ritual [differing in some respects of emphasis and portrayal from American patterns].

On one edge of the garden is a triangular zone representing a preparation zone and philosophy comparable to a place of preparation and recognition of initiates. It is also symbolically referred to the wedding zone, a joining of God and man. The other 3 zones represent the 3 Degrees of the Blue Lodge; The EA zone is just next to the preparation zone. The FC zone, next, and the EA zone are equal in width and length. The Master's Degree area is twice as wide as each of the other two and contains a large lake with a central fountain and statue group

When I heard about this garden, I resolved to go visit the garden and see it myself. I took the family [wife and 2 sons. / daughter was born later]. I was able to determine the 3 zones with various trees, specially-trimmed hedges, trees, and statues in the Rococo style. I found no common Masonic symbols except a square and compass at the foot of one of the statues by the lake in the third zone.

I told Hans-Peter about this and he said he would take me through the garden, just the two of us. From this visit I learned and could see the teaching of masonry again:

THAT ONE HAS TO BE INTRODUCED AND TAUGHT BY A FRIEND AND BROTHER.

I saw the way in which the German expressions and teachings were portrayed in great and accurate detail throughout the Bishop's summer garden. It was artfully displayed as adapted in Rokoko art style as well as clever hedge and tree trimming. One trimming of hedges, in EA or FC zone, kept the trimming in such a manner that one could look from an edge path near the small castle all the way through to see a statue of Diana at the opposite end of the zone. It suggested that, whether some of the styling or gardeners or care-keepers may not have Masonic overseeing, the patterns had been followed carefully. Overall, it was a very moving experience.



Another very interesting story was discovered in talking with brother German masons. It had to do with a [to me] surprising development. Apparently, one or more of the Popes [did not learn which one] WAS a mason. But at one point he must have done something to anger the brothers and they put him out of the lodge [!!]. Apparently, from this situation, he retaliated and held the position that Catholics could not be masons. It was also apparent that there is no such prohibition from the Masonic side.

There was a point in history [Nazi time?] *when masonry went underground*. From this there was developed a special *recognition button* for suit lapels or other button holes. It is a blue enamel forget-me-not on silver. Also, historically, it was also necessary to protect the elements of degree and lodge work. From this they developed the Teppich [carpet] into which they could easily wrap and seclude from unfriendly eyes the jewels and appointments in case discovery were threatened

Another Masonic Experience was when Hans-Peter invited me to go with him to Frankfurt am main, where he was initiated into the 14th Degree [Rose Croix] of the Scottish Rite southern Jurisdiction. Their lodge room was so appointed that the drapes along the walls reflected the degree in progress. There was fabric with all-over pattern of tears for the Lodge of Perfection and an all-over pattern of roses for the Rose Croix degree.

One of the practices of the German lodge was a "Table Lodge", which could be held with brothers only or with wives. During the meal there were times for a scheduled toast and drink of wine [usually white in Germany]. The wine glass for this had to have a thick heavy glass base in order to withstand being slammed down onto the table at the completion of the toast. The glass was referred to as a "cannon" [Kanone]. I have one such glass engraved with Masonic symbols and a dedication from my friend Hans-Peter to me.

Another important experience related to Masonry was when we went with the Jensens to a little town, Sommerhausen, south of Wuerzburg to a performance of [brother mason] Mozart's, The Magic Flute (which is a Masonic opera, and contains the patterns, ideas, hand motions and foot steps from lodge rituals). If any of the cast or directors were masons they did not demonstrate them on stage. But the *Three Times Three* [3 x 3] is prominent in the music. The opera is with Masonic features portrayed mostly in allegory.

Our learnings, joys, sharings, and accomplishments were greatly enhanced by our time of learning to know the German people. They told us that they also had equal feelings and benefits from these experiences.

VIELEN, VIELEN DANK !! GOTT SEI DANK !!

22 March 2008

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