

Autobiography of Carlo Henze, M.D.

My father's brother, Uncle [Carlo](#), wrote several drafts of this partial autobiography in the early 1990s, with many changes and notes inserted. It covers his early years and his fond memories of Naples, as well as information about his parents and grandparents. In some cases it was not clear which page or note belonged to which draft. As a result, the following is a composite of several drafts rather than his final draft, which I did not find and which may not have existed. I have also included an earlier, rather different introduction.

*Christopher Henze
March 2011*

Tableaux of the Past

(A Retrospective)

*Motto: Man is wholly himself
only when he plays.*

[Friedrich von Schiller](#)

I do not lay claim to being a creative writer but I enjoy playing with words. As a scientist I have been trained more as a collector of facts rather than as a wizard with words. How many times have I heard it said when engaged in conversation with friends, colleagues and even more so with the younger generation of kin: "You have led such an interesting and varied life, have you ever thought of writing it all down so we can read about it at leisure?" Yes indeed I have. I think we all occasionally have the urge to make notes or perhaps keep a journal during periods of special significance in our lives, not originally I am sure with the thought of turning it into a literary product but perhaps playing with the thought that at some later point in time it could be converted into something more substantial. As an example, letters and jottings written during my service in World War II became the infrastructure for an article submitted to and published by the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, which was well received and gave life to subsequent correspondence.

As I ponder the autobiographical trail however, I begin to realize that this is a demanding undertaking pervaded with calls for detachment and introspection because it touches upon the lives of so many who have since passed away or, for that matter, may still be alive. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* [*Speak no ill of the dead.*] will be my Leitmotif. I have by nature been a rather private person, free of the urge to parade my innermost sentiments before the public unless they be trusted friends. Privacy is such a precious gift in this age of kiss and tell and electronic skullduggery when everything has to go on tape, or be conserved in data banks or personal dossiers. I know all about this from my early encounters with the Nazi regime. I do not arrogate to myself the importance to preserve and make known to a wider entourage how I happen to conduct my life. To "tell all" may occasionally provide useful catharsis in confronting your psychiatrist but

would probably be dreadfully boring material for anybody else to read. As the case may be, silence often may be more eloquent than words.

Due to the diversity in place and environment, very little documentation about my family has survived. It is perhaps symptomatic of our peripatetic life style and the lesser longevity of the times that with the exception of my paternal grandmother I cannot myself recall seeing any of my grandparents. Tuberculosis was the great killer of the times and particularly rampant among my Anglo Irish ancestors young and old. I would assume that malignancies were equally prevalent as a cause of death, but diagnoses of cancer were only in their initial stages. Unfortunately none of us, with the exception of my paternal grandfather, has had the habit of retaining letters, diaries, biographical notes and relevant documents which would facilitate the recall of events in any chronological order. I therefore must draw heavily on the cerebral data bank and of course the recollections of my mother, in whose memory this chronicle is assembled. Her life span of close to 100 years extended over parts of two centuries. (I myself survived two world wars, one of them as a youngster on the losing side, the other as a soldier on the winning side.)

Alternate Introduction

Ever since Gregor Mendel discovered the laws of inheritance and Charles Darwin espoused the concept of evolution, man has been interested in genealogy, the knowledge of one's heritage and ancestry. Moreover the question is often asked: Where do you come from? Are there traits in make-up and personality which can be traced back to your antecedents? Are you what you are because of events that governed the lives of your parents, grandparents, etc.?

The basis for this exposé is not going to be the construction of a family tree. This would consume endless time, research and travail. It has been tried before with little outlook for success. Moreover, it would tell you nothing of the events which shaped the lives of the names on the tree. Since in addition to genes, the environment has profound bearing on what you become as a human being, I would like to delve more deeply into family history and try to reconstruct events which may have had bearing and influence on its immediate members. Life is, after all, a continuum in the sense that certain characteristics of temperament, talent and behavior -- not to speak of physical attributes -- are inherent in our genetic make-up and will manifest themselves in subsequent generations. I propose to leave it to the reader to discover such traits in him or herself and to draw his or her own conclusions.

My motives in trying to set something down on paper at this particular time are fostered by the recent death at age 94 of our beloved Mummy Claire. With a life span nearing one hundred years, she represented the last remaining link to an era reaching into the last century. Much of what I am going to say I owe to her recollection of times and events long gone by. In fact, many times I will be unable to state with certainty whether a particular fact or happening is told from my own experience or communicated to me by my mother. I will be 80 years of age this year and memory is apt to get dimmer and fade.

With these reflections set forth, I find myself sitting down before my little Hermes, so appropriately named and still manually operated, rummaging among my engrams for selected tableaux of a varied life, encouraged perhaps by the knowledge that hardening of the arteries is a progressive condition befalling the human species, cholesterol or no cholesterol, and tending to befog if not to obscure the sequence of events. And finally but no less assertively, I wish to thank a dear friend well versed in the whimsies of creative writing, to whose persuasions I have readily succumbed. I would not wish to disappoint her.

As to the early phases of my life, which take me into the early parts of the 20th century, I am obviously wanting in personal recall. I must for this purpose rely on the recollections of my parents, to whom I owe so much in addition to the genes, the DNA and the environments in which I grew up. Memories of them extend far beyond anything I could elaborate upon in this context.

I daresay it all began in the famed Italian city of Naples, Napoli in the local idiom, the “Parthenope” of the ancient Greek mariners plowing coastal waters of the Mediterranean Sea. She was one of the sirens of mythology who, unsuccessful in seducing Ulysses with her songs, was cast ashore by the crew. They could not have chosen a better place: “Vedi Napoli e poi muori” [See Naples and then die] is the often heard phrase today, suggesting that once you have seen Naples you have seen everything worthwhile and may quietly fade away. The magnificent bay is indeed a sight to behold and has acted as a magnet for countless tourists, artists and photographers over the centuries. People from Germany, England, Switzerland and North America in their quest for sunshine became the most frequent “refugees” from harsher climes. Men of letters, artists and finally scientists from all over the world sought solace and a new life-style in the bustling city and its stimulating setting, a sort of blend between San Francisco and Rio de Janeiro, all of it dominated by Mount Vesuvius, the veritable prototype of a volcano. The natural beauty, cultural heritage and history of this great port and metropolis reach far back into ancient times. The Romans very early recognized the magnificence of the area and turned Neapolis into a center of commerce and recreation. Similar reflections apply to the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum only a couple of miles across the Bay and destroyed in 79 A.D. by one of the major eruptions of Vesuvius. Even today there is hardly a spot along the shoreline that upon a little digging does not uncover some remnant of ancient culture. The city, rising spectacularly above the sea, is topped by a medieval citadel. An extravaganza of nature fraught with history and a mingling of material wealth, abject poverty and iniquities beyond belief are the terms which come to mind.

It must be remembered that Naples was and still is a great port which even today gives haven to the ships, merchant and war, of many nations. Shipbuilding, industry and commerce were the mainstays of its wealth, much of it in the hands of entrepreneurs and corporations from abroad, benefitting from the availability of cheap labor in the city’s slummy suburbs. Entrepreneurs, often from abroad, built factories producing anything from pasta to furniture.

Moreover, this activity led to the growth of an extensive international community with a quasi-elitist nucleus and respective diplomatic representatives. American Express and Thomas Cook Travel Agency made their contributions by attracting visitors in droves from abroad. The spirit among these foreign groups was congenial and a busy social life existed. Balls, outings and festivities were arranged for visiting naval ships and their crews. As a spin-off of the presence of major men-o-war it was bruited about that the wives of personnel stationed in Naples expecting babies would go aboard ship to give birth in order to preserve appropriate citizenship. Educational facilities were readily available for the children of the foreign elements, especially on the high-school level so that sending the sons and daughters to boarding schools at home became unnecessary. The “Scuola Internazionale” had an excellent reputation and was also open to the children of Italian families who could afford it. My brother and I in later years went to the “Scuola Svizzera” patterned on the Swiss high-school system.

From these remarks you may get the impression that a separate elitist foreign community existed among the indigenous Italian population, a conclusion which, at least in our circles, did not comply with the facts. As will be shown in the course of this narrative, our contact, especially with the working-class population, was mostly warm and free of prejudice. As children often in the care of Italian nannies, the local idiom became our natural means of communication aside from German and English, and even today a few days in an Italian-speaking environment brings back the language of Dante, including the Neapolitan accent. By the age of five or six, we children were reasonably fluent in three languages. Italians, by nature gregarious and fond of children, welcomed us strangers in their midst with good humor and indulgence concerning any linguistic shortcomings we might have had. Maids and household help, usually totally illiterate and coming from some mountain village in the Abruzzi, quickly became members of the family and stayed on for years, usually until their marriage, or even for life.

Italians’ love of children is legendary. Nannies were held in high regard and wore special “uniforms” which made them immediately recognizable when attending to their charges in parks and along the famed Via Carracciola. Paternalism yes, but in the best sense. One of our maids, Carmela, came from a small village in the Abruzzi mountains and had never been on a train before. She could neither read nor write and was unfamiliar with the workings of a clock. The sun and stars had always been adequate for her to tell the time. Under my mother’s tutelage she became an excellent maid and could even be convinced to wear shoes rather than go barefoot on the tiled floors of the house. She was proud and delighted to look like *una signora*.

Italians from the North are inclined to criticize their brethren from the South for being dishonest (*imbroglianti*) and often out to cheat you if they can, but in my recollection this was done as a sort of sport rather than malevolence. If it became evident that the customer got wise and for good measure spoke the local lingo, apologies were gracefully proffered. Even the local Camorra (sister of the Mafia) could be induced to help retrieve stolen goods and punish the perpetrators for their inconsiderate act against a “friend” if approached through

appropriate “channels.” Nobody in Italy will deny that Neapolitans make the smartest lawyers, most accomplished musicians, vocalists and actors. Anybody who has seen some of the early movies of Sophia Loren (née Maria Scioccoloni from Pozzuoli, a suburb of Naples) will remember the way of life among the underprivileged and yet so eminently resourceful population inhabiting the slums and outlying districts of the big city.

My mother was always of the opinion that the “simple folk” were the most endearing and their men the most chivalrous in the world. As will become evident as this narrative progresses, she got to know and admire particularly the fishermen who in their lovely boats were out day and night, storm or calm, searching for their prey. The sight of a crew of three or four standing up and handling the heavy oars in unison was indeed a magnificent tableau and the subject of the famous frescos by Hans von Marees in the library of the Zoological Institute (of which more later in this text). No outboard motors in those days, but plenty of songs to sustain the rhythm. A couple of anecdotes may help to enliven the relationship between the local and foreign elements:

The elderly English lady appalled by the merciless punishment the young cartman is conferring on his stubborn donkey walks up to him and angrily tells him to stop immediately, giving him at the same time a lecture about cruelty to animals. The cartman, surprised, bows deeply, dons his hat and mutters: I am delighted, Madame, to finally encounter the *Mamma di mio ciuccio* (the mother of my beast).... In the same vein, the response given to my father when he complained to the police that the evening before he had chased a would-be burglar trying to enter the house through a groundfloor window: I am sorry, Sir, but my advice to you is to keep a well-loaded rifle handy (strictly against the law).

Having thus far set the stage for the play to be presented let me turn on the footlights and introduce the performers making their appearance in Act 1, my parents: My father, named Martin Friederich Wolfgang Henze, was born in Dresden, Saxony, on August 28, 1872, and owes the third of his three first names to the poet Goethe, whose birthday falls on the same date. My mother, Claire Barbara Ross Henze née Foley, was born in Southampton, England on July 29, 1882. It may be said therefore that my ancestry is literally “Anglo-Saxon,” to which one might wish to add Celtic, since my mother was of Scottish-Irish parentage. This preamble invariably raises the question: how come you happen to be born in Italy and even bear an Italian first name? A question which during my life has been asked hundreds of times, since my phenotype is anything but Mediterranean (or at least what most people believe to be Mediterranean).

My father held a position at the Zoological Institute in Naples, which I will describe in greater detail later on. My parents were civilly married on June 21, 1906, by the English consul in Naples and subsequently blessed in a service in the Naples Church of England. The reasons for this affinity to the British Commonwealth will become evident as the narrative progresses. Be it said at this point only that my father, though German born, was always an ardent anglophile.

I came to see the light of day a year later on July 10, 1907, followed by my brother Robert on July 3, 1908. The Italian version of my name Carlo was suggested by the registrar at the Naples town hall, where all newborns had to be indexed for birth certificate purposes. He seemed to feel that Carlo sounded better than Carl and, on second thought, my parents agreed with him. I have since been called everything from Carlos to Charles to Carl (written with a C or K) but like the Italian version best. My childhood sobriquet incidentally was "Bibu" which is an anagram for the German diminutive word *Bubi* (small boy). My mother endearingly called me "boysie."

It appears from an account given by my parents that "lady luck" has been on my side from early on, in fact before I was born, in that during her pregnancy my mother came close to being shipwrecked during the 1906 eruption of Vesuvius. Eager to get a closer look at the goings-on across the Bay, the newly marrieds boarded a research vessel belonging to the Aquarium (see later) and headed into the ever increasing rain of ash, lapilli and violent electrical discharges. Lost in total darkness and exposed to possible collision with major ships equally adrift in the murk, they spent a night of terror until finally reaching shore the next morning. I had another lucky break when a year later parked in my crib on the terrace of our home a large piece of masonry broke off the roof and landed only a few inches beside me. Temblors in the volcanic surroundings of Naples were commonplace, and old and rickety buildings suffered minor damage frequently. The worst of quakes occurred in December 1908 in Calabria and Sicily, when the city of Messina was totally devastated with a loss of 150,000 dead and wounded. Father took part in a rescue mission and I vividly remember his telling of the gruesome aftermath of the catastrophe.

My narrative of the "early days" would be incomplete without a description of the residence where my parents chose to settle. Named Villa Born" (after its German owner), the building would be characterized in local parlance as a "palazzo," by no means a palace but an old imposing structure dating back to the times of the Renaissance. It had at one time been the residence of the Bourbon ambassador to the King of Naples and stood high up on a hillside above the Mergellina, a small fishing port in the western outskirts of the city. A rather imposing building, it was completely surrounded by vineyards and stands of assorted fruit-bearing trees. The view across the Bay with Vesuvius and its plume of smoke was magnificent. Two giant Mediterranean Pinus shaded a simple stone monument known as the "Tomba di Virgilio," the grave of Vergil. Our address read Cupa Montana No. 4, Salita Sant'Antonio, bespeaking the cliff-side character of our home. In many ways a dream, but dreams have their liabilities too. There was no access to the property by automobile or truck, only the two-wheeled colorful cart pulled by a donkey and characteristic of southern Italy made it to the front door. I can vividly recall the sight of mother tremulously watching the unloading of her beloved Bechstein grand piano from such fragile transport. In the ancient Roman tradition the front door was protected by the display of a mosaic displaying a black snarling dog and the warning "Cave Canem." Beside the simple lane connecting the property to the bottom of the hillside, there was a footpath consisting of some 300 steps hewn into the volcanic tufa whose inception was reached by climbing up five floors in an adjacent apartment building and transferring from its roof to higher ground

and the trail. It was in later years to become our daily route to school in the Monte di Dio area of the city, a good $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour's walk. It was moreover the itinerary taken by Dr. Malbron, called to attend to the delivery of my mother's first born. No wonder the local "levatrice" (midwife) had long taken care of matters by the time the good doctor arrived totally out of breath. It did as well convince mother that birthing in the boondocks had its hazards and that it would be better to take refuge in a decent hospital in Zurich for her second baby, my brother Robert. It goes without saying that the locals let it be known that only crazy dogs and Englishmen would venture to reside in such an out-of-the-way place. As for me, I am sure it precipitated a lifelong affinity towards living in high and faraway places.

The interior of the premises, while primitive by today's standards, was fascinatingly attractive nevertheless: five large high-ceilinged rooms with French doors leading onto a giant terrace fronting the whole length of the building. Artful tiles covered every floor. Cascades of geraniums and blooming ice plant spilled from terracotta amphorae; wisteria and roses climbed up the walls, and, not to be forgotten, the marvelous view across the Bay. Kitchen and maid's quarters were separate and anything but fancy. Most of the cooking at first was done on charcoal fires kept alive with straw woven fans. Vicenzina the cook held resolute sway in her domain, and with her simple devices produced wonderful Neapolitan dishes which she could put on the table at any time of the day or night. She was an older woman with the voice of a man and was referred to by the adults as "the hybrid." Children were not welcome in the "cucina." Only much later was gas brought into the house and regular stoves installed. Bedrooms were spacious and the beds protected by mosquito nets supplemented by fragrant candles to protect the sleepers during the night. In those days malaria was not unheard of in the Naples area and there were plenty of anopheles and aedes buzzing around after sundown in the summer in the absence of DDT and repellents. Naples was claimed to have the best water supply in southern Italy, coming all the way from the Abruzzi mountains, in part on viaducts built by the Romans. Not so healthful were the steaming slums and narrow alleys where typhoid fever, tuberculosis and dysentery were frequent visitors, especially in summer, mostly spread by contaminated water, milk and seafood. Keeping the house free of the common arthropods such as fleas, bedbugs and roaches (*scarafaggi*) was a daily chore and was accomplished by washing down the floors with kerosene.

Employees of the Zoological Institute (carpenters, mechanics, *dieners* [servants]) could also be called on to help in cases of emergency. Shopping for food was mostly done by my mother, accompanied by a man to carry the bags. I remember well her "negotiating" in broadest Neapolitan for the price of fish and other goods, watching the scales with an eagle eye. Occasionally she used to reweigh the acquired merchandise when she got home and if she found the weight to be short, she returned to the vendor and gave him hell. One trick to look out for was the insertion of a sliver of lead into the mouth of the fish before placing it on the scale or slipping a finger into the pointer on the antique scales. Fruit was always plentiful and came from the surrounding "masseria" [tenant] farm in the form of grapes figs, oranges, apples and gorgeous mulberries. A pleasant relationship was always entertained with the local farmer and his large

family. My brother and I had the run of the property, which was extensive and sprinkled with hidden grottos, springs and hideaways.

It would require endless space to give a full account of the exciting lives we youngsters were privileged to lead. Excursions into the neighborhood organized for the foreign visitors to the Institute were frequently undertaken and participated in by the children of the staff. The volcanic Campi Flegrei and Monte Nuovo near Pozzuoli with their numerous fumaroles offered excitement and education. I will never forget the “grotta dei Cani,” where a heavier-than-air layer of carbon dioxide oozing out of the ground made a couple of dogs led in by their master unconscious in half a minute but left the individuals breathing the air in the upper layers unaffected. As soon as the unfortunates were returned to the fresh air, they revived in short order. Surely not a very nice experiment, but very impressive for us youngsters. Skeptics, I must admit, claimed that the dogs very quickly learnt what it was all about and spontaneously lay down the moment they entered the cave! Another target of frequent outings was Mount Vesuvius and of course Pompeii.

Through my parents’ friendship with British Consul Alan Napier and his wife Dorothy, we had access to Villa Rosebery, a fabulous property overlooking the sea west of the city. It was there that my brother and I learnt to swim among the craggy rocks washed by the sea.

As if evidence of changing times and the human condition were necessary, let me take a long leap of some 75 years later when [Harriet \[Carlo’s wife\]](#) and I on a vacation trip to Sicily made a stopover in my native city. Eager to show her the site where I was born, we decided to retrace the past and look for Villa Born. Walking along the famed Via Caracciola, I tried to focus on the spot high up on the hillside that I remembered so well. Nothing seemed familiar; so we continued our walk to the Mergellina and began ascending the well-known upgrade. But where there had been vineyards and orchards there was a crisscross of paved roads fronted by high-rise apartment houses, cars rushing up and down winding streets. By dead reckoning I finally found the site where Villa B. had once proudly stood. There was nothing but a blackened ruin. Local inquiry revealed that the building together with a few adjacent ones had been destroyed in a World War II bombing raid, *Sic transit gloria mundi*: We left in sadness and disappointment.

By now you may begin to wonder how come the preoccupation of the Henze family with Italy and Naples? Father named [Martin Friederich Wolfgang Henze](#) and mother [Claire Barbara Ross Foley](#) certainly do not sound like citizens of Italy and thence require some elucidation. The latter part of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th were times of relative calm and prosperity in central Europe. Science and technology were making quantum jumps; commerce flourished as a result of improvements in communications. The Zeitgeist seemed relatively free of chauvinism; national wealth grew rapidly in Europe and North America. The political configuration of many countries began to change and a certain degree of internationalism prevailed. Centers of excellence in science, physics, medicine and biology sprung up and became magnets attracting the young to study abroad. Funding became available from governmental and

private sources (Rockefeller Foundation, Kaiser Wilhelms Gesellschaft, etc.). Fame and prestige could be gained by studying with individuals and at schools famous for their accomplishments.

It was in this atmosphere that a German zoologist named [Anton Dohrn](#), who had inherited considerable wealth from a parenteral beet sugar business, had the idea of investing it in an institution of unusual scope and imagination devoted primarily to the study of living structures and substrates. Charles Darwin and evolution, genetics and comparative zoology were the talk of the day among scientists. Sea life seemed to offer a bridge from more primitive species to the higher levels of development. On his travels through the Mediterranean Basin Dohrn became convinced that marine animals because of their availability, simple structure and rapid reproduction represented unusual advantages over more complex species of the animal world. He became attracted to the Bay of Naples as a site for his dream of an institute. A generous offer from the city to provide a site in a lovely seaside park, the "Villa Nazionale," sealed the deal and construction soon began in the final years of the 19th century. A famous German architect, [Carl Sattler](#), drew up plans for a befitting edifice, which soon became a center of attraction not only for scientists the world over who came to pursue their investigations in this private institution free of government control, but also for tourists who came to view its giant aquarium –the first in the world - harboring fish and wildlife of the deep sea, exactly what had sparked the generosity of the Neapolitan government in the first place. As a supplement to the private investment, entrance fees from the public interested in viewing this reservoir of sea life for the laboratories provided an additional source of income. Known as the "Acquario" or "[Stazione Zoologica di Napoli](#)," its fame and example were soon to spread to other countries and give rise to Woodshole in Mass.; Monte Carlo; Van Nuys, California; and even the aquarium in New York. Physiologists, geneticists, biochemists and pharmacologists flocked to Naples to do basic research, enjoying at the same time the beauties of the southern landscape.

As might be expected for an enterprise of such magnitude, it soon became evident that the resources of the founder would be inadequate to sustain the project and that funds on a major scale would have to be mobilized. Here again Anton Dohrn and his advisors came up with an ingenious idea by asking for annual commitments on the part of governments, universities, foundations and individual sponsors in return for providing facilities and laboratory space (termed "benches") to deserving scientists of their countries. Each "bench" had a fee attached to it and could be subscribed to for one researcher. Moreover, two or three "benches" could be secured in this manner and provided space for the corresponding numbers of scientists. The budget would cover standard equipment but special apparatus would be built or acquired at the expense of the scientist.

Around the turn of the century, my father, an associate professor in organic chemistry at the University of Leipzig, got a lucky break when his boss, the famed Professor [\[Johannes\] Wislicenus](#), recommended him for a position at the Naples institute. This position was to entail both administration of the Physiological Chemistry (today Biochemistry) Department and opportunity to do his own

research. He was to function at the same time as administrative assistant and teacher to Reinhardt [aka Rinaldo] Dohrn, the son of the founder and new director of the institute. He grabbed the opportunity with alacrity and moved to Naples in 1903, where he quickly adjusted to the new environment and mandate. Henceforth he became known as the “Maestro,” the Italian term for teacher (not necessarily musical as in English parlance), a title of which he was very proud. Reinhardt and he came to be great personal friends and with my appearance on the scene in 1907, Reinhardt was asked to be my “comparo” (godfather). The subsequent history of the “Stazione Zoologica” through two world wars will be referred to in another part of this narrative. Father’s mission, the scientific environment and the attractions of Italy turned out to be so stimulating that he decided to remain *in situ* indefinitely. Aside from his managerial duties, he turned out a series of fundamental papers on the biochemistry and metabolism of marine animals. Sea anemones and polyps had a special attraction for him. Some of his most important discoveries were the presence of vanadium rather than iron in the blood of *Ascidia*, the isolation of hemocyanin in certain invertebrates and identification of the poison of the cephalopod salivary gland. This work in later life would gain him the chairmanship of Medical Chemistry at the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Needless to say that for us children the close relationship with the “Aquarium” was a constant source of fascination, not to speak of the contact with the flow of brilliant scholars who frequented our home. Among the names which quickly come to mind are three Nobel Prize winners: [Otto Warburg](#), [Otto Loewi](#) and [W. Hess](#). But of course there were many more luminaries in the field of science and even politics to which we were exposed as children. I can think of [Julian Huxley](#), [Fritz Baltzer](#), Jeffrey Smith, [T. Boveri](#), Herman Helmholtz, E. Theodor von Bruecke and many more. If not busy helping father, his “dieners,” Don Pasquale and Torillo, were only too happy to take us down into the subaquatic world and let us touch the electric eels, one of which generated so much power as to light up a small bulb. Another showplace was the display of the “polpi,” the “octopussery,” where morsels of fish would be fed to the voracious beasts and grabbed with their suckered tentacles. The ejection of a cloud of ink as a protective shield when attacked would render the animals invisible. After perusal of the aquarium, we were usually moved upstairs to the laboratory wing for “tea,” which was prepared in chemical flasks on Bunsen burners and to which members of the staff were always welcome. Occasionally we were taken on the research vessel, the [Anton Dohrn](#), to the isle of Ischia, where the Institute maintained a villa at the entrance to Porto d’Ischia for use by staff and their families. Climbing Monte Epomeo Romeo, an extinct volcano crowning the island, or swimming off a hot-springs-fed beach were *de rigueur* for us children. The culmination of such outings was the homeward trip by “carozella” (fiacre), which brought us to the bottom of our mountain retreat.

From my narration you might have gained the impression that we led a life of leisure and affluence, a notion of which I must dissuade you. While I have no information concerning the income of a university professor in the basic sciences in those days, it was surely anything but spectacular, especially in Italy. Yet my parents managed by innate frugality and clever management of resources to get great pleasure out of life. We children were not overwhelmed with toys and gifts

and instead were very early given a small carpenter's bench and tools to make our own under the watchful eye of father, who was very clever with his hands. We also had the good fortune of having wealthy friends who owned cars and lovely properties to the use of which we were generously and often invited. Among these I recall the Wenners, Swiss industrialists; the Müllers, owners of a hotel chain in Switzerland; the Meuricoffres, Swiss diplomats; Lord Rosebery, English peer; Alan and Dorothy Napier, English Consul; Madame Hauser, wealthy Swiss widow; Arnold Ruesch, industrialist; the von Orellis and many more. My father developed into an impassioned anglophile, both in habitus and ideology, and we were usually thought of as Britons. By the time I was seven, I spoke three languages and a smattering of Neapolitan, the idioms of which have stayed with me until today, always generating surprise when I converse with latter-day Italians.

To complete the Henze family genealogy, let me take leave of Naples for a moment and turn back to Dresden and my paternal grandparents consisting of grandpa [Robert Eduard Henze](#) born in 1827, son of Johann Gottlieb Henze born in 1795 and Amalia Frederica Gebhart born in 1802, both born in Freyburg a.d. Unstrut in Thuringia in eastern Germany; and grandma Anna Carolina Amalie née Baltzer born in 1836, also in Freyburg. My maternal great grandfather was a protestant minister.

I have no personal recollection of my grandfather Robert, since he died in 1906 before I was born, but I am told that he was a small man with a goatee, blessed with a marvelous sense of humor, great artistic sensitivity and a bent for the theater. Details of grandfather's life were written up by himself and are part of the family "archives." They were translated into English from a hardly legible manuscript by Harriet and myself for distribution to future generations. Be it only mentioned at this point that he came from a relatively simple background, originally a craftsman specializing in iron work, who on his own put himself through the Dresden School of Arts and Architecture to become a sculptor of considerable fame in his native State of Saxony, at that time still a kingdom and famous for its penchant for the arts and French culture. Dresden was the capital of the State of Saxony and the seat of a court with King August the reigning monarch. It was a carefree city, a center of the arts matched only in intellectual aplomb by its sister city of Leipzig, which became the book publishing center of the world and famed for its "Gewandhaus orchestra." The Saxons are said to be a happy-go-lucky breed among the Germans. The Saxon dialect is considered "funny" among fellow Germans and is the source of jokes and mockery. French was widely spoken among the intelligentsia and was standard at the francophile court, which was generous in support of the arts and sciences. Renaissance buildings were numerous and gave the city a certain flavor and beauty. Among the most renowned of these structures was the "Zwinger" (art museum), world famous for its collection of some of the loveliest paintings by Raphael and other Italian masters. The Academy of Fine Arts attracted scholars and artists from all over central Europe. The Dresdner School of Arts and Crafts was famous for its appealing and elegant products - textiles, ceramics and copperware. Hellerau outside Dresden became a focus for the art of dance, where Delacroz and his disciples held sway for many years. Music and the theater flourished.

No wonder then that young Robert was drawn in this direction. His stepfather operated a forge and iron craft shop in the backyard of their simple residence, and young Robert was indoctrinated in the craft at an early age, while still in school. He later served his apprenticeship in his father's shop and gained a certificate as "master" of the craft. Life in those days was by no means easy, and young Robert spent endless hours at hard and demanding labor in the murky environment of the foundry.

Already at an early age Robert showed unusual talent for drawing and design, using the little free time he had making pocket money by painting miniatures of his coworkers and their girlfriends.

With the completion of his apprenticeship came the urge for independence and one day he informed his apprehensive mother that he was going "on the road" as a journeyman traveling about the German states and adjacent countries to see what he could do with his craft. That was common practice among young craftsmen who, burdened only with a backpack, roamed the country looking for work. They were a cheerful lot imbued with good fellowship and tight standards of conduct. It seem that as a likeable and competent young man he found no difficulty in getting hired. His jobs varied from building strongboxes to installing locks in newly built homes. His talent for making drawings and illustrations came in handy, and an ingratiating deportment made him an appreciated worker.

After two years on the road Robert returned to Dresden and confronted his mother and stepfather with the idea of enrolling in the Academy of Fine Arts to study design and sculpture. The implication is that this plan was not accepted with great enthusiasm by his elders, who had hoped he would continue in the family tradition as a craftsman. Robert however had saved some money from his travels and persisted in his project, at first helping out halftime in the shop but then becoming a full-time student at the Academy. His teachers apparently thought highly of him and soon consigned some of their own work to the young man. This was common practice and gave the aspiring artist a chance to test his own ability, develop confidence and learn the intricacies of how to make a living as a working artist. At the appropriate time his teacher suggested that he make himself independent. A studio was rented, and the wait for the first order began. Recommendations from his teacher and mentors at the Academy helped in starting a career which in the course of time led to fame and at least some moderate income. Orders for memorial plaques, decorative reliefs and fountain figures started coming in. This was a period of relative prosperity in which well-to-do Burgers and art-oriented city fathers were eager to acquire art for the beautification of their towns. Robert was a product of the period and while there was nothing startlingly new about his artistry, it was attractive and fitted the taste of the latter part of the 19th century. In the beginning most of the creations were hewn in stone or cast in bronze, transferred from models made in wax or plaster of Paris. As his ability and ambition grew, marble became his material of choice, and he was awarded a professorship at the Dresden Academy. Many an attractive fountain figure and public monument bearing the Henze *fecit* can be seen in major cities of the state (if they have not since been destroyed by war [Some survived.]).

While Dresden came through WW I without a scratch, it suffered unbelievable destruction at the end of WW II and slipped into the orbit behind the Iron Curtain. My father's ancestral home at Chemnitzerstrasse 39 was totally destroyed in the notorious and needless last-minute of WW II bombing of that beautiful city by the Allies, described in [Kurt Vonnegut's](#) novel, [Slaughterhouse Five](#), the content of which makes distressing reading. The ruin and the valuable land were sequestered by the Communists as "foreign property of unknown heirs." A walk through [Henze Street](#) in honor of grandfather Henze could readily have told them who the owners were. Father had a younger sister named Elisabeth (Liesl), who married [Alexander Tornquist](#), later chairman of the Department of Geology at the University of Graz in Austria. Because of the separation in time and place, we children had little contact with our Aunt Liesl. Children, boys and girls of her marriage and our cousins, except for Frank Tornquist, a lawyer in Graz, have faded into oblivion.

Robert and Anna's two children, I was told, grew up in a normal if artistic environment and attended school in the appropriate educational institutions of the times. Exposure to music was a natural, and father learned to play the violin with a high degree of accomplishment. His sister was equally proficient on the piano. The love for classical music became a mainstay of our family, as will be shown later in this narrative. After completion of high school (*gymnasium*) and before entering university, the law called for a year of military service, which [father](#) absolved with an engineering unit. Adventures experienced in the building of pontoon bridges across the Elbe River became the subjects of many a comical story in his repertoire. Subsequently he studied natural sciences at the Universities of Bern, Heidelberg and Leipzig, graduating with a PhD in organic chemistry in 1897. A postgraduate position in the Department of Organic Chemistry with Professor Wislicenus in Leipzig led to the title of Dozent (asst. prof.) in 1902 and assoc. prof. in 1910, the latter after his transfer to the Marine Zoological Institute in Naples, in 1903.

I do remember my [grandmother](#) quite well from a visit with my parents at age six in 1913 (give or take a year). She was a tall imposing lady, very deaf and using a trumpet-like hearing aid which fascinated us children. My brother and I had great respect for her and were always mildly flustered and presumably well behaved in her presence. My visit to Dresden has left me not very pleasant memories because opportunity was taken to have my tonsils removed, which was accomplished in those days without anesthesia! This was promptly followed by an inner-ear infection which had to be lanced and drained and nearly cost me my hearing.

My grandmother's brother, [Armin Baltzer](#), emigrated early to Switzerland, where he became a prominent geologist and university professor in Bern. His son (and my father's first cousin) [Fritz Baltzer](#) studied zoology and spent much time in Naples working on genetic problems and embryology, using sea urchin eggs. For a time he lived with us in Villa Born and remained our much loved and admired "Uncle Fritz" or Zio Fritz until his death some ten years ago [in 1982]. As chairman of the department of Zoology at Bern University, he was well known among his colleagues for his work in developmental evolution and publications

on the physiology of the Bonelia worm. He had two sons, Armin and Werner, and two daughters, [Anni](#) and [Dorli](#). [Armin](#) died in an avalanche accident on [Piz Kesch](#) and [Werner](#) succumbed to a brain tumor. The girls are both married, live in Switzerland and have progeny of their own. Our family's enduring affinity with Switzerland is based on this early family relationship.

Equally compelling and interesting is [mother's](#) family history and her love affair with Italy. Born 1883 in Southampton to [Nelson Trafalgar Foley](#) and his first wife [Jane Ross](#) of Glasgow, Scotland, she was the younger of two siblings and named [Claire Barbara \(Ross\) Foley](#). Her brother, equally named Nelson Trafalgar after his father, was a few years older. The choice of names over at least three generations points in the direction of a seafaring trait (Battle of Trafalgar Oct. 21, 1805). Grandfather Foley was indeed a "naval person" working as managing engineer for a major shipbuilding enterprise in Southampton, specializing in building propulsion units for merchant and warships. It seems to me that in conformity with the times, his wife Jane, whom the children hardly got to know, succumbed very early to the ravages of tuberculosis, leaving the young family without maternal care and making it necessary for the two children to be placed with assorted aunts and uncles in Ireland, where my mother acquired her distinct accent.

It came, I am sure, as a welcome stroke of luck when grandpa Nelson (Pash to his children) received word from his company to go to Naples for an extended stay to supervise the installation of giant British steam engines in the ships of the Italian Navy, among them the first Italian battleship, the [DUILIO](#), the pride of the Italian Navy. After exploring the situation and finding suitable quarters, he decided to have his children join him in Italy. The term "suitable quarters" needs some interpretation in that these consisted in the acquisition of an "island" off the western shoreline of the Bay of Naples. The property essentially consisted of two rocks connected with an overpass, one of them bearing the house and surrounding garden, the other a shed for garden implements and a dump. The underpinnings had over the years been excavated by the local fishermen and used as refuges for their boats in foul weather. Below the surface of the surrounding sea were the ubiquitous remains of ancient Roman structures consisting of walls, mosaics and pillars readily visible when swimming above in calm weather. A swirling sea channel several hundred feet wide separated the islet from the mainland. Romantic? You bet! As befits a seafaring man and an engineer, grandfather acquired a launch named *Lucciola* (Firefly) to take him across the Bay to the shipyards at Torre Annunziata, and built a cable arrangement to take you across the channel in stormy weather, when using a boat was too dangerous. Antonio, the local fisherman lived with his family across the channel on the mainland and ran the launch or pulled the ropes for the cable car when necessary. An ideal set-up. It was at this point in time that he had his children Claire and Nelson join him on this romantic isle, certainly a long shot from dreary Southampton. No wonder the children fell in love with the island, named La Gaiola ("Seagull").

Mother was about fourteen when she arrived from England and subsequently attended the "Scuola Internazionale," first as a boarder and later by commuting from the island. Needless to say, in the ambiance of [Gaiola](#), she became a

competent swimmer and diver and won several medals in rowing contests. Young men from all over the world, mostly post-docs and at the beginning of their careers, transplanted into a strange culture, needed advice and what might be called TLC. Some of them in later years won Nobel Prizes and other honors and would remain friends for life. Parties and excursions had to be organized and many an “afternoon tea” and dinner were served in our home. Servants made entertaining easier.

Word got around in later years that potential suitors visiting the island were taken to “Peculmine” a nearby crag and invited to jump off the top into the sea. If the gentleman refused, he was not considered qualified for further consideration. I understand that our father met the test with ease and was thus allowed into the inner circle of the Foley clan.

I am sorry that I have only faint recollections of my grandfather and life on Gaiola, having been taken there as a baby. I do remember being bitten by the family fox terrier and bleeding. When mother called on the maid to go get some cotton and a bandage, she had disappeared but then returned with “three hairs” taken from the dog which were to be placed on the wound as a cure. Needless to say, my mother objected vehemently to this therapy.

The scenario changed somewhat when grandpa Foley decided to remarry and took as his bride one of the younger sisters of [Sir Arthur Conan Doyle](#) of [Sherlock Holmes](#) fame, [Ida Doyle](#). She was very much younger than her husband to be, in fact not much older than my mother, who by then was in her early twenties. The second marriage issue were two boys, [Percy](#) and [Innes](#) Foley Doyle, nephews of Sir Arthur and our mother’s step brothers. Although [Claire](#) got along well with her young stepmother, I suspect she had some reservations when the new bride arrived and laid claim to the affections of her beloved Pash. Aunt Ida, as we children called her, was a very competent lady, having been directress of a girls finishing school in [Eastbourne](#). Her transfer to Italy and Gaiola no doubt represented a remarkable change in life style and finally led to the sale of the property to a wealthy ophthalmologist from Germany, Dr. Praun, and her return to England. No doubt the sale of Gaiola was a painful wrench for all the Foleys. [\[Subsequent owners included Giovanni Agnelli and John Paul Getty.\]](#)

Daughter Claire’s further habitat was determined by her own marriage in 1906 and subsequent move to Villa Born (see earlier). By the time of her marriage, mother was twenty-three years old and from all accounts a very attractive young lady, proficient in four languages and an excellent piano player, having been a pupil of Arcangelo Rossomandi, one of the top piano teachers in Naples. Listening to her play on the Bechstein Grand, a wedding gift from her father and like a member of the family which accompanied us across all frontiers over the years, is one of my earliest and most enchanting memories. Mozart and Chopin were her favorites and seemed most responsively to fit her moods. Occasionally she would accompany herself in the rendering of those lovely sentimental folksongs of Naples, of which I remember one in particular: *A finestra che luceva e mo no luce piu*, the sad story of a fisherman’s wife. In later years her uncanny ability to play chamber music from the page and joined by her father’s violin and

yours truly on the cello gave hours of great joy and endless entertainment. Remember, there was no radio or television in those days.

The Foley story would be incomplete without a few words about brother (our uncle) [Nelson](#), who of course grew up with sister [Claire](#) on [Gaiola](#), an ideal brother sister relationship, only a few years apart in age. As befitted the times, Nelson was transferred to boarding school in England and later studied chemistry at the Federal Polytechnic Institute in Zurich. Settled in England with his young wife née [Esther Dahl](#) from Denmark, we youngsters got to see him only occasionally on his visits to Italy. In retrospect he was very much a “male edition” of our mother, both in habitus and temperament. His children, [Nelson](#), [John](#) and [Jill](#), our first cousins, all live in England and have remained intimate friends and sources of warm kinship despite physical separation and two world wars. Nelson was a successful architect with the Forte hotel chain, John a retired neurologist and Jill married to [Kenneth Wilkinson](#), an attorney. All have progeny of their own but being “once removed” both physically and in terms of generation represent names rather than individuals. Other members of the Foley clan live in Australia, Ireland and, for all I know, the United States.

As is customary among friends and close relatives, I am often asked: How did [Martin Henze](#) and [Claire Foley](#) happen to meet and fall in love? History on that subject is wanting in detail and even if I knew, I would feel it belongs in the category of “privileged information.” Be it said only that it is not surprising that in the romantic and convivial atmosphere I have tried to convey, two young people of similar interests (music), temperament and zest for life, love of nature and sports (tennis, swimming, diving) would sooner or later have met. Father had always been a very handsome specimen of manhood and surely the heartthrob of many a young lady of the times. Photographs of my mother in her early twenties reveal a graceful and lovely blonde with the famed English complexion and very well put together. According to her own account, she never was in want of admirers, especially of the seafaring kind, who often arrived in style with naval emblems and crews to take her back to ship for dances and entertainment. She was no doubt also well aware of the fickleness of Italian men, who despite their attractiveness had somewhat different concepts of marriage from her own British upbringing.

Link

- [Pictures from Naples from 1870 to 1890](#)