

Shanghai
Refuge and Chance

The Life Story of
Manfred Braunschweiger
from Burghaun

SHANGHAI

Zuflucht und Chance

Refuge and Chance



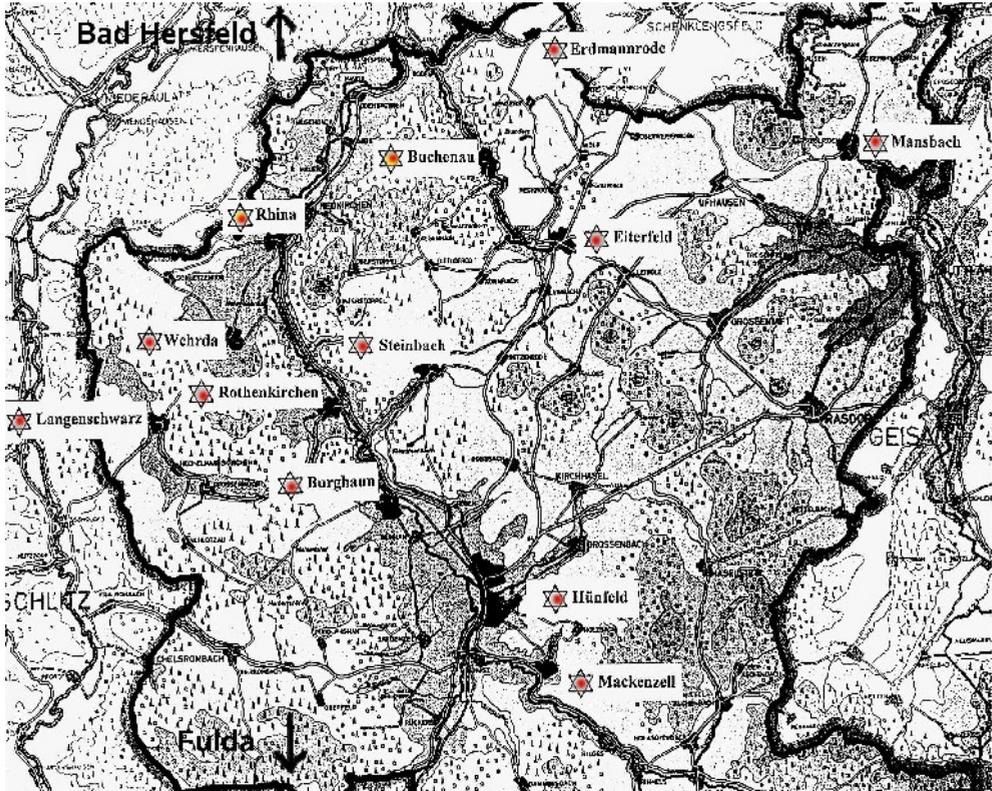
VERFOLGUNG

Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert

**Shanghai
Refuge and Chance**

**The Life Story of
Manfred Braunschweiger
from Burghaun**

**Translation into American
by Martin H. Siebert**



The former 12 Jewish communities in the county of Huenfeld

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Introduction

November 10, 1988 was the 50th anniversary of the so called 'Reichskristallnacht' (Crystal Night), which also marks the date on which Burghaun's synagogue was set on fire and destroyed. On occasion of this event many commemoration ceremonies were conducted and memorials consecrated. It was my firm conviction that it was high time for our community after all these years to put up a special plaque to honor the memory of the venerable congregation of the Synagogue and her victims during the Shoah. After the local political factions caught on to my idea and promoted the realization, mayor Braun consecrated on July 10, 1994 an appropriate bronze plaque at Burghaun's castle yard.

However, before this consecration could take place I had to do quite some convincing. Part of this process was my immersing myself into a lengthy search for the tracks of Burghaun's Jewish citizens. The result of my prolonged research was first documented in an exhibition and later on turned into the publishing of a book.

The first Jewish witness whom I personally met in 1989 was Frederick M. Browning from New York, who was born in 1919 in Burghaun as Manfred Braunschweiger. Repeatedly over the years has he been visiting his old home town and the grave sites of his father David and his grandparents Braunschweiger at the local Jewish cemetery, and as recently as March 2004 he, his wife Hansi and their three daughters had been visiting.

Manfred Braunschweiger's life story is so astounding that I decided to publish and present it as a work in its own right.

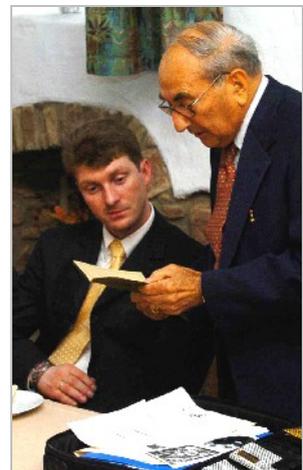
Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert
Burghaun May 2004

Reception at Burghaun in March 2004

In March 2004 Mr. Frederick M. Browning - formerly Manfred Braunschweiger - from New York travelled to his former home county. He was accompanied by his wife Hansi and their three daughters Vivian, Renita, and Deborah. The main reason for this trip was their participation at the consecration celebrations of memorial plaques in Sterbfritz - vicinity of Schluechtern -, as well as at the Jewish cemetery of Altengronau. The plaques had been dedicated by Manfred Braun-schweiger's cousin Henry Schuster, who was a native of Sterbfritz. As a matter of course the Braunschweiger family would also pay a visit to the hometown of the head of the family. Mr. Alexander Hohmann, the mayor of Burghaun, deemed this occasion as a fitting opportunity to honor their presence with an official reception at Burghaun's castle.



1. *The Mayor presents two Burghaun photo documentaries to the guests.*
2. *Mr. Browning shows his passport stamped with the red J for Jew.*
3. *Conversation with coffee break*





Official reception - M. Browning surrounded by his wife Hansi, daughters Renita, Vivian, Deborah, and Elisabeth Sternberg (between the Brownings) as well as the Mayor Hohmann.

The official reception by representatives of the municipality and the local churches was a first for the city of Burghaun, however, as the mayor, a member of the post-war generation, stressed in his welcome address, it was the most natural thing to do and a special honor to boot. In his reply M. Braunschweiger thanked the mayor for the heartfelt reception and spoke to an attentive audience about his life during the time of the persecution of the Jews. The reception was followed by a joint visit of the Jewish cemetery. And then the next day E. Sternberg-Siebert showed the Browning family around the town.



In front of the former home of the Braunschweiger family

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH IN BURGHAUN

The David Braunschweiger Family

The Braunschweiger family comes from Steinbach which nowadays is incorporated with the town of Burghaun. The ancestors of the family had been living there for generations. Manfred's grand-father Mendel Braunschweiger (born in 1838) moved around 1882 with his family to Burghaun where he according to city records received the rights of a citizen on March 16, 1889. He acquired the property at 'Bahnhofstrasse #12' as residence for the family.

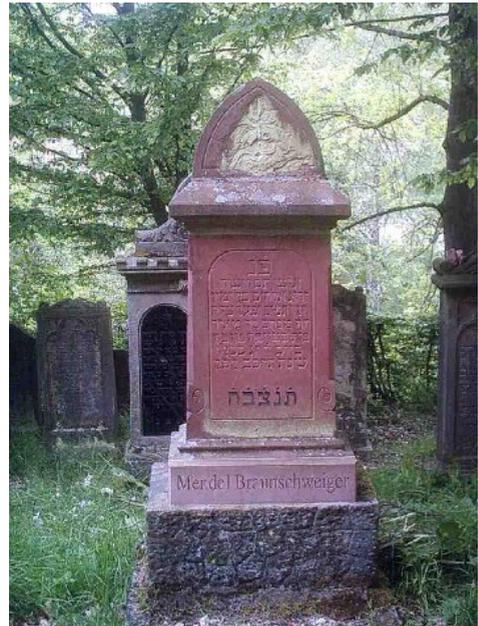
Mendel's spouse Hannchen nee Strauss (born in 1844) came from Langenschwarz, a small town now incorporated with Burghaun. The couple had nine children, five of whom settled permanently in Burghaun. Four of the sons started new families in Burghaun.

*Grandparents Mendel
and Hannchen
Braunschweiger about
1907 in their yard at
'Bahnhofstrasse'.*





Manfred Braunschweiger and his wife Hansi in 1999 at the grave site of his father David at the Jewish cemetery of Burghaun



Hanna passed away in 1908 followed by Mendel Braunschweiger in 1921. They both rest at the Jewish cemetery of Burghaun, which was the joint cemetery for the Jews of the county of Huenfeld.



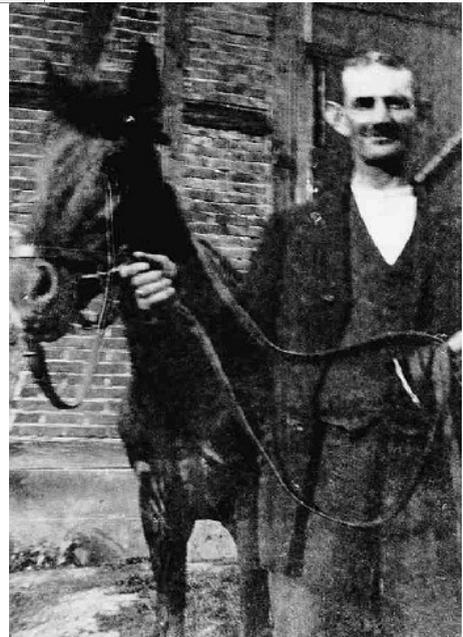
David Braunschweiger was born on September 20, 1873 in Steinbach. Circa 1907 he married Regina (pet name Ritta) Schuster, who was born on April 5, 1880 in Sterbfritz near the little town of Schluechtern in Hessen. Regina came from a highly regarded local family.

Manfred's parents David and Regina Braunschweiger about 1914, David wearing his GI outfit.

David with hourse Klara in his yard in Burghaun

David was a salesman as was his father Mendel. He earned his living mainly as a livestock dealer, however, occasionally he would also deal in hardware and agricultural implement.

He died on November 4, 1934 from a severe illness and was buried at the local Jewish cemetery. The inscription on his tombstone reads as follows: "Here rests a man, straight-forward and sincere, godly and law-abiding. He cared for his children at all times. He was pious and faithful in all he did..."



David Braunschweiger / Burghaun

Eisenwaren / Landw. Maschinen

Bank-Konto:
Städt. Sparkasse Hünfeld

Burghaun, den 6. Sept. 1931
Kreis Hünfeld

Fr. 43.

RECHNUNG

Herrn Norbert Brauch, hier.

Zahlungs- u. Erfüllungsort für beide Teile Burghaun Kr. Hünfeld		Stk	Stk
Sandte Ihnen für Ihre Rechnung u. Gefahr per:			
1	Grün emal. Stg. - Füllstove		
	mit Unterlagplatte & Röhren sowie		
"	1 preisrot emal. Füllstove	1	25.-
"	1 grün emal. Unterlagplatte	1	7.20
"	4 Röhren	4	9.40
			<hr/>
			215.60

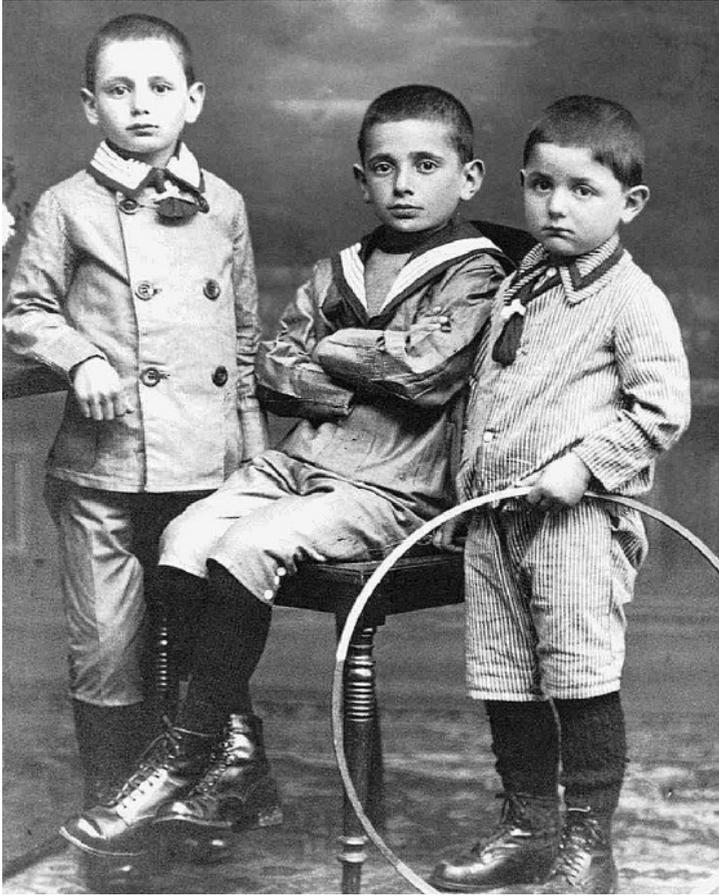
Reklamationen können nur binnen 3 Tagen nach Empfang der Ware barüchsiglich werden. Verpackung wird selbstständig beizubehalten, aber nicht zurückzugeben. Bei vorzeitiger Zahlung berechnen wir Bankzins. Vergütung für sämtliche Waren bleiben bis zur vollständigen Bezahlung mein Eigentum. Zahlungen sind nur direkt an mich zu leisten.

Bill dated Sept. 6, 1931 for one green enamelled 'fill-stove' and one burgundy enamelled stove plus parts like base-plate and stove pipes

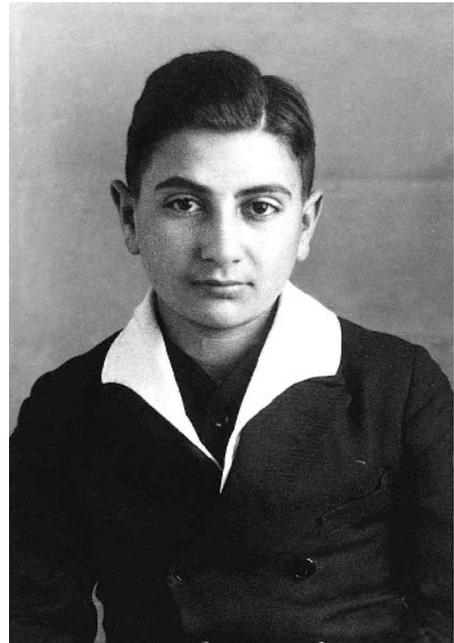
Ziel Tage

The Braunschweigers had four sons who were born in Burghaun:

- Milian - born Oct. 13, 1907
- Theo - born Nov. 6, 1909
- Norbert - born July 9, 1912
- Manfred - born April 21, 191



*Theo,
Milian
und
Norbert
Braunschweiger
ca. 1918 in
Burghaun*



Manfred 1928 in Burghaun



The Braunschweiger's house at about 1913 - 'Mother' Regina looks out the window with Norbert while Theo and Milian stand in front of the house.

The Braunschweiger's house at the 'Bahnhofstrasse 12' was a duplex the right half of which was David's and his family's home whereas David's brother Bernhard, his wife Ernestine, and their daughter Herta used to call the other half their home.

The three elder sons of the Braunschweigers were salesmen and gave their father a hand with his business. Milian and Norbert used to occasionally sell wine. In the early thirties Theo moved to Celle where he worked in the textile business, and in 1938 he married a young widow. Norbert was the first one to emigrate to the U.S.A. in 1937/38.

Milian the eldest remained with his mother, who was widowed in 1934, in Burghaun until in 1940 he was able to emigrate. 'Mother' Regina had problems with the 'authorities' and it was not until 1941 that she succeeded to board one of the last ships to flee to the United States of America.



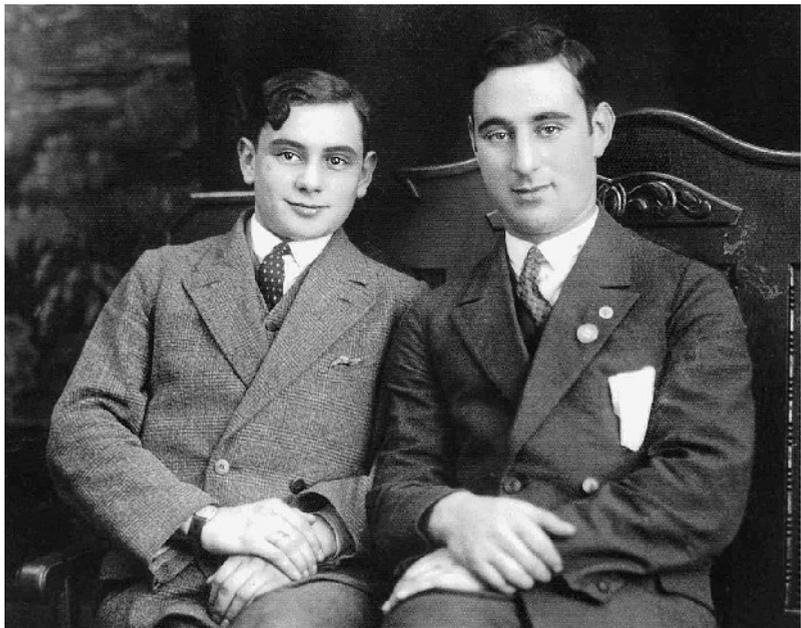
Bernhard Braunschweiger 1916 in a WWI trench

In 1914 at the inception of WWI David and his brothers had joined the German Armed Forces in order to fight as patriotic German soldiers for the 'fatherland'.

Later in 1916 during WWI Davids brother Bernhard was killed in action, fallen for the 'fatherland'.

Bernhard's widow Ernestine became a victim of the Shoah.

Daughter Herta was a survivor of the Shoah. Lonely and unnoticed she passed away in her New York apartment in 2003.



1928 in Burghaun: Manfred's brother Theo (left) with his cousin Willi Braunschweiger

*Milan with his
parents 1933 in
their garden in
Burghaun*



*Left: Theo Braunschweiger with a
collecting box, most probably in Celle
about 1934*

*Below:
Theo 1930 in Burghaun*



Norbert Braunschweiger who lived in the U.S.A. since 1938, and his wife Herta about 1945 in New York



JUDISCHE KULTUSVEREINIGUNG
 JUDISCHE GEMEINDE
 IN FRANKFURT A. M. E. V.
 ABTEILUNG:
 AUSWANDERER-LISTENBERATUNG
 FERNRUF: 716 61

35
 121

Fr. 2. Januar 1940

U 33 - 1071/40

Fr. Regina Sara Braunschweiger. Fr. Rödterbergweg 77
 lieferte heute ab:

Koffer 1:
 № 14 - 1 Wollkleid; № 15 - 1 Linnenkleid

Koffer 2:
 № 1 - 2 ^{weiße} Tischdecken; № 3 - 6 Handtücher
 " 7 - 2 Betttücher; " 9 - 4 Kopfkissen

Die Ablieferung ist in Ordnung & deckt sich mit Bescheid & Listenabschrift.

ABTEILUNG:
 AUSWANDERER-LISTENBERATUNG
 FERNRUF: 716 61
 (M. Dr. K. K. K.)

Apparently at the end Manfred's mother lived in Frankfurt a. M. - The Jewish community Frankfurt had to act as advice office for the "emigrants".

Kf., 8.1.1940.

7, Kl 18/40.

- Kf.
- 1) Keine E-Kappte anlegen für
Regina S. Braunschweiger, Bürgerin.
 - 2) Leichenmerk Kurztügig.
 - 3) Antrag unter

Kl-Nr 18/40

in Kurztügeliste verzeichnen

- 14) Schreiben an die Kf. für ~~_____~~
Füllde

« Betrifft: Kurztügig Regina Braunschweiger, Bürgerin.
Die Kurztügeliste obiger Bürgerin wurde ich
zurück, da Sie die für die Abfassung des Kurztügel-
verzeichnis gültigen Vorschriften außer Acht lassen.
Für jeden Löffel des Reisegepäcks sind besondere
Blätter des Verzeichnisses zu verwenden. Auf den Ein-
trägen ist die Rubrik « Zeitabschnitt » genau auszufüllen.
Weiter ist anzugeben, wann Ihre Reisegepäckstücke
abgegeben wurden.

Hierbei ist es unerlässlich, daß das Zollamt
Füllde bestätigt, was für Gegenstände des bereits am
27. III. 39 genehmigten Kurztügel, den gleichen Bürgerin
in dem neu eingereichten Verzeichnis nochmals aufgeführt
gewählt werden =>

An irregularity almost botched mother Braunschweiger's flight to the U.S.A.! The Minister of Finances in Kassel reprimanded the moving company: "The moving-list of the above emigrant is being returned since the regulations concerning the listing of chattels has been violated..."



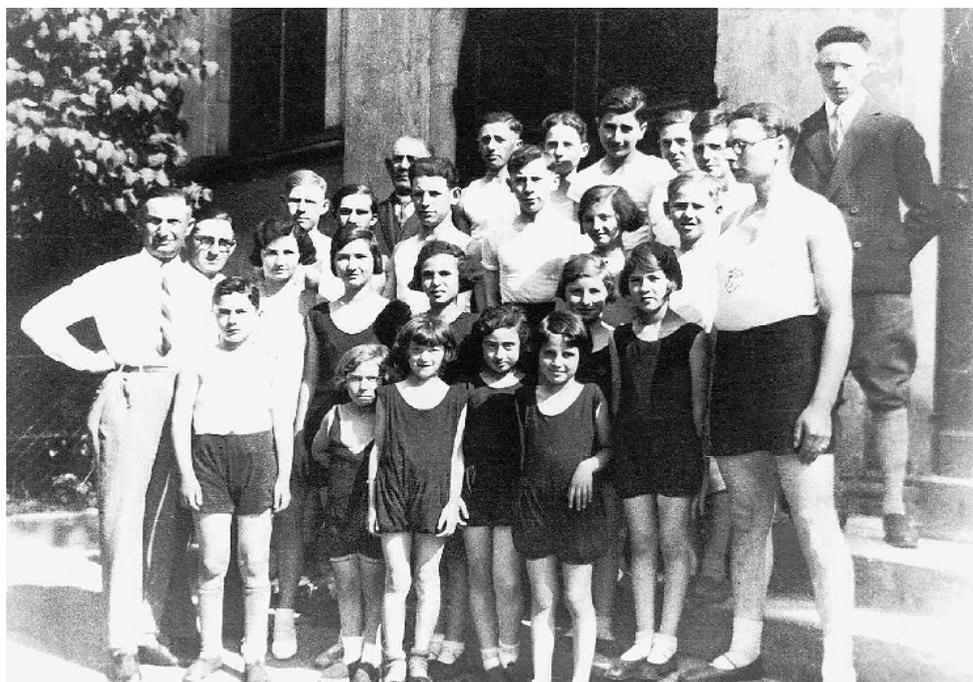
Total view from Burghaun before 1938 - on the left next to both churches one can clearly see the synagogue.

Manfred's further Career

After receiving four years of elementary education at the Jewish Grade School in Burghaun Manfred attended the so called 'Latin-School' at Huenfeld from 1929 until April of 1934. As a matter of course Manfred also was a member of the Jewish Athletic Association where soccer was a favorite for the boys. According to Manfred his childhood and adolescence in Burghaun were rather normal and peaceful until 1933; this changed, however, drastically with the appearance of the 'brown-shirts'. Smashing windows and entry doors was a specialty of the Nazis.



Latin-student' Manfred wearing his school-hat at about 1929 encircled by his mother and the elder brothers Milian and Norbert



The members of the Jewish Athletic Association 1933/34 in front of the Synagogue. Manfred featured in the last row fourth to the right.

Thus it was not only once that the family from fear of Nazi attacks sought shelter at the barns of their neighbors, the Folgers and the Jaegers.

In 1934 Manfred graduated from 10th grade. He commuted to Fulda by

train on a daily schedule since he had started an apprenticeship in business with the A.H. Wertheim Co., a well reputed Jewish business with long-standing tradition. The store was located at 21 'Mittelstrasse'.



The A. H. Wertheim store at Mittelstrasse in Fulda



Manfred Braunschweiger at the back left with Aba Wertheim in 1937, son of the boss Mendel Wertheim and other employees. The child in the center is the little daughter of Aba Wertheim.

The owners Mendel and Isac Wertheim carried manufactured goods and fashion ware. After successfully finishing his apprenticeship Manfred worked as a sales assistant until the day of the notorious Novemberpogrom in 1938.

It was a very drastic experience for Manfred more or less a harbinger of the November Pogrom - when in June of 1938 his brother Milian was apprehended and carried off to the concentration camp at Buchenwald. It must have happened during the week of June 13 to June 18 within the framework of an arbitrary action called "Arbeitsscheu Reich" (work-shy 'Reich'). This action targeted petty criminals and Jews, the latter of whom were arrested due to alleged violations of public regulation or without any reason at all. Since Milian was issued a number on the waiting list by the U.S. Consulate, which promised an imminent emigration, he was released rather soon, however, he had to report to the authorities on a regular schedule. At first, however, he had to be admitted to the hospital in Fulda due to his miserable physical condition.



Not only did he suffer from diabetes, which most likely was not given any attention at the KZ, but he also had a broken nose from a blow with a rifle butt by one of the SS that had to be treated at the hospital for two weeks. Eventually in February/ March 1940 Milian succeeded in fleeing to the U.S.A.

Milian in April of 1939 in Burghaun

The 1938 November Pogrom



The Burghaun Synagogue in late summer of 1938. A hobby photographer took this shot of the Synagogue from the far side when storks perched on the roof who would take a break on their migration to the south.

Following a Nazi meeting on the evening of November 9, 1938 approximately 50 to 80 potentially violent persons gathered at the Burghaun market place. Only a massive deployment of police force could prevent them from 'storming' the homes of the Jews. However, during the night and early in the morning Nazi thugs devastated the Jewish Grade School and threw the desks and benches into the Synagogue. Then they soaked everything with gasoline, and at 10:30am the 'House of the Lord' that had only been consecrated in 1910 was on fire and burned out totally.

During the night the Nazis had smashed all the windows in the homes of the Jews, and in the early morning hours all the Jewish men were dragged out of their homes and arrested.

Within the context of 'Kristallnacht' (crystal night) the three Braunschweiger brothers who were still living in Germany were taken into so called 'protective custody' at their respective places of residence. Theo was carried off to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.



The venerable House of the Lord of Burghaun's Jews after the November crime of Nov. 10, 1938. The ruin was razed and the sandstones were used to built a small railroad station for the Huenfeld-Treischfeld railway. The destruction of their religious center was at the same time the end of Burghaun's Jewish community/ congregation.

At about 07:15am on Nov. 10 a Nazi-neighbor escorted Milian and Manfred from their house to City Hall to be processed together with other men who had been taken into custody.

During the afternoon another twelve Jewish men from Rhina and Wehrda were taken to City Hall in Burghaun to be processed. At about 05:00pm Manfred and Milian together with the other Jewish men were incarcerated at the so called asylum for the homeless, where they had to spend the night on straw. Next morning they had to clean up their 'camp site'.

Due to last summer's KZ-incarceration Milian's physical condition was so bad that he most likely would not have survived another imprisonment. So his brother implored him: "Play dead or do something else!" Just before they were being hauled off to Kassel Manfred overheard a Nazi-guard who said: "This one is a goner anyway!" So they left him lay and eventually send him home due to being unfit for arrest, however, under strict orders for regular report to the authorities. - Manfred and the other Jewish men were carried off to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Buchenwald

According to informations obtained from the Buchenwald Memorial the arrested Jews were hauled "on trucks to Kassel, from there by train to Weimar main station. There the prisoners had to take the staircase at the side entry the so called 'prince's entry'. Then the SS chased them through a



small tunnel to the station square while they were beating up on them. From there they were hauled on trucks to the concentration camp at the Ettersberg (mountain near the town Weimar) which was about an eight km drive.

Cynicism and scorn at the entry gate to the Buchenwald KZ

Besides the common cruelties there was a water shortage at the camp due to its mountainous location. Plus there were hardly any latrines for that many people."

Manfred Braunschweiger's personal recollection of the events which the Nazis called "Kristallnacht" is as follows:

On the morning of Nov.11, 1938 we were being carried off on trucks from Burghaun to Kassel. From there we continued by train. In Weimar things became darn brutal. After we got off the train the SS beat up on us like crazy. At about midnight we arrived by truck at the Buchenwald KZ and immediately were assigned our respective 'shacks'. Our shack number was 4A.

The hygienic conditions at the camp were catastrophic! It was wet and cold, and lying down on those boards hurt badly. There was no sufficient amount of prisoners' garb for us newcomers, and actually they didn't know what to do with us. We were cropped, and then the SS taking turns beat up on us. They'd beat us for anything, it was utter arbitrariness. Being hung up on one's wrists, getting beat on the torture-buck, it was just their daily routine! Being literally tortured by thirst was terrible since there wasn't enough potable water and the air was filled with swirled up dust. I happened to have a cup on me which my mother gave me to take along, and I didn't even know why. In that cup I caught the drops of water that dripped off the tar shingles through a small slot. A real fight broke out for these few drops.

Manfred together with all the prisoners of the camp had to fall out in the morning, at night, and sometimes even at noon for roll call. At times it would take hours, and with those icy November storms on the Ettersberg it was a real torture.



FLIGHT TO SHANGHAI

World Tour into Exile

Manfred Braunschweiger continues with his memories: Up to the time WWII broke out one could still get out of Germany even out of the KZ if one could prove that one had the possibility to emigrate. That such a miracle was imminent I didn't expect in my wildest dreams: One day early in December my name was paged at Buchenwald KZ. That was pretty scary since it could mean the worst. I had to report to the main gate. There were two SS-men and I overheard one telling the other: 'He is headed for China today, he is going to be picked up.'

Never in my life had I thought about emigrating to China, this was total news to me! I don't recall exactly but I had to sign some papers. Also, I can't remember whether they gave me a haircut because I was about to be released or if they had done so a few days earlier. At any rate I had a bald head at the time of my release. Eventually two SS-men escorted me to a barrier outside the camp. All of a sudden I realised a cab just a few yards behind the barrier- and lo and behold my mother sat in it! She had arranged for everything! She had been informed that there was a possibility to escape to Shanghai. She had bought a first-class ticket for the voyage since tourist class was completely booked.



Mrs. Braunschweiger had sold her house and real estate in order to rescue her incarcerated sons. She obtained all the papers necessary and the tickets for the voyage to escape to China. Finally she didn't own a thing anymore and had to be supported by the Jewish welfare.

Regina Braunschweiger im April 1939

Besides she had to buy a round trip ticket because the Co. Norddeutscher Loyd was smart enough and insisted on it in case they wouldn't get permission to land at the destination. Anyway, we took the cab directly to Fulda - without a stop in Burghaun.

My mother had brought along a suitcase packed with underwear and clothes which I took to the home of my boss' Mendel Wertheim at 'Bahnhof-trasse'. There I gave myself a thorough cleansing since at the KZ Buchenwald it was almost impossible to do so. -



Regina Braunschweiger in USA

Konzentrationslager Buchenwald
Kommandantur

Weimar-Buchenwald, den 5.11. 1938

Entlassungsschein

Der Schutzhäftling Manfred Braunschweiger
Vorbeugungshäftling

geb. am 21.4.1919 in Burghaun hat vom 14.11.38

bis zum heutigen Tage im Konzentrationslager Buchenwald eingesperrt.
Stapo Kassel

Auf Anordnung des Geheimen Staatspolizeamtes Berlin vom 3.12.38
Reichskriminalpolizeamtes Berlin

wurde er nach Kassel entlassen.

Der Lagerkommandant
[Signature]
#-Staubsaatführer St.-


R. Bo-kmann, Weimar

On the back of the discharge certificate : "You have to report immediately to the office of the State Police at Kassel." However, Manfred's flight began immediately when he boarded the cab!

Finanzamt
 Bezirk V St. Nr. Hersfeld, 1. Dezember 1938

Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung

Gegen die ~~Auswanderung~~ ~~Überführung eines~~ ~~Veräußerung des~~ ~~Stiefgutes~~ ~~eines~~
~~Heimatschirms~~ ~~Wäsche u. Bekleidungsstücke~~ ~~Wäsche u. Bekleidungsstücke~~
 → ~~Überführung von~~ ~~Langgut~~ ~~nach dem Ausland~~ ~~unter~~ ~~Verhängen~~ ~~einigung~~ ~~einigung~~
 Schanghai (China)

für Kaufmann Manfred Braunschweiger
 geboren am 21. A. 1919 zu Burghaun, Kre. Hünfeld
 wohnhaft in z. Zt. Arhäftelager Buchenwalde

bestehen bezüglich der Reichssteuern — einschließlich der Reichsfluchtsteuer — keine Bedenken.
 Das zur ~~Entnahme~~ ~~beantragte~~ ~~Kapital~~ ~~von~~ ~~RM~~ ~~befügt~~ ~~der~~ ~~Entnahme~~
 die ~~Anteilsklein~~ ~~nach~~ ~~der~~ ~~hier~~ ~~vorhandenen~~ ~~Unterlagen~~ ~~als~~ ~~eignes~~ ~~Vermögen~~ ~~ist~~
 Gut: ~~Verfrage~~



W 205. Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung für Auswanderer usw.

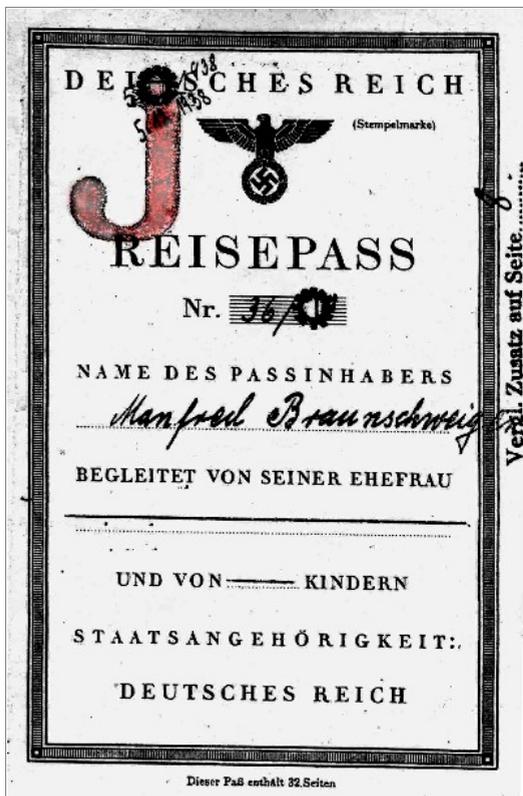
Gedruckt 1938
 23941. 2/31.

Tax office: There is nothing wrong with Mr. Braunschweiger's emigration to China.

That evening I went to the railroad station. It was my plan to meet my brother Theo on the train to Genua. My mother had also bought a ticket for the voyage for Theo, who was a prisoner at the KZ Sachsenhausen. Just like myself he, too, had been released.

The train passed the border at Brenner-Pass into Italy and from there to Genua. Being checked at the border was pretty scary since we feared something could go wrong at the very last moment. However, we lucked out and everything went well.



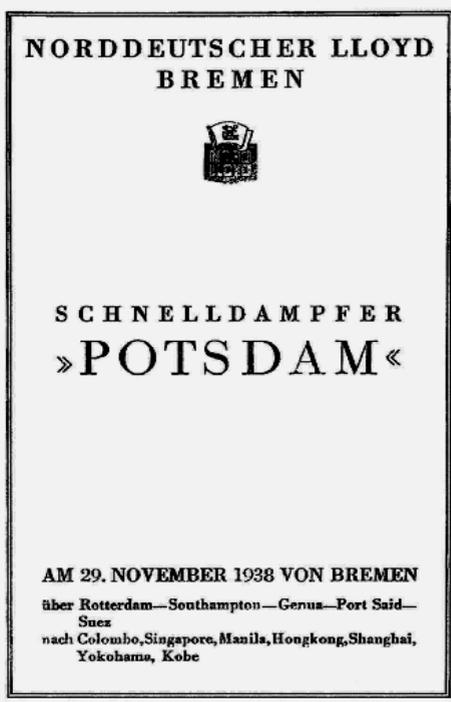


Manfred's passport which as of October 1938 was only valid provided it had a capitol 'J' stamped on it indicating the bearer was Jewish.

Our ship sailed from Bremen to the Far East via Genua, sailing through the Suez canal, on to Colom-bo, Singapore, Manila, Hongkong, Shanghai being the final destination. The voyage could have been rather enjoyable had we not looked like criminals with our bald heads.

As I already mentioned we were traveling first class, although out of necessity. Most of all the passengers on board were Germans, many of whom were business men who worked for big German companies and were traveling to China. After all it was a German ship.

First page of the ticket for the express steamer 'Potsdam', which Manfred and Theo boarded in Genua on their way into Exile.



In those days Shanghai was an important business port, and there were many excellent companies located. Among the passengers on board there were only a few Jewish people. All together there were approximately 20 000 Jews from Middle Europe who escaped to Shanghai.

The only reason for being able to take refuge in Shanghai was the fact that it was British, American, Japanese, and French mandate.

Digression Shanghai - A few remarks regarding the metropolis of Shanghai

Shanghai developed from a hamlet of fishermen during the course of centuries into a metropolis of commerce. In the 20ies and 30ies of the 20th century it became a city of contrasts. The "Paris of the East" was also notorious for its large numbers of criminals, prostitutes, and beggars. In those days Shanghai was an international territory, a free harbor which China had to cede to the West as a free trade zone after the so called opiate wars of the 19th century had been lost. The huge supply of goods from the West ruined the weak national economy and it didn't take too long until numerous textile and tobacco factories in Shanghai were owned by rich foreigners. For them Shanghai became literally a gold mine from which they extracted wealth and capital. However, they also invested in new manufacturing plants, thus creating quite a number of jobs and housing for the locals.

Nevertheless the foreigners were the 'kings'! Their lifestyle was 'feudal', often decadent and wild, and they exploited the cheap Chinese workers unscrupulously. E.g. they would put

up signs at public parks reading 'Off limits to Chinese and dogs!'

In the French and international quarters of Shanghai there lived among the Chinese population approximately 50.000 foreigners, who acted according to the laws of their respective countries. They were permitted to travel back and forth without passports. This was before the the immigration wave of refugees from Europe occurred.

In the late 1930-ies the colonial life in Shanghai came to its end. During their campaign of conquest through China the Japanese pushed forward to Shanghai in 1937, bombarded and occupied part of the international quarters called Hongkew. The major part of the Chinese population fled for the international 'concession area'.

When the Jews from Europe attempted to flee for safety from Nazi persecution they were not welcome everywhere! The only harbor that welcomed them without visa was Shanghai, which became the 'rescue anchor' for about 20.000 Jews from Europe ever since 1938.

Initially many of the refugees lived under very primitive conditions in refugee camps. Pretty soon, however, they would found their own communities by settling within the partially abandoned and bom-bed out Hongkew in the midst of the impoverished rest of the Chinese population. In front of the Japanese occupation forces these ingenious outcasts would not only rebuild houses, set up businesses, " and start cafes, but they would also create a diverse cultural life. Since the cost of living expenses were rather low many of the refugees achieved a lifestyle worthy of a human being.

On Hongkew's mainstreet most of the business signs featured German names. It's no surprise that this part of town would soon be known as 'Little Vienna'.

After Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 the war in Europe escalated to the Pazific, and the Nazis exerted more pressure on the Japanese as

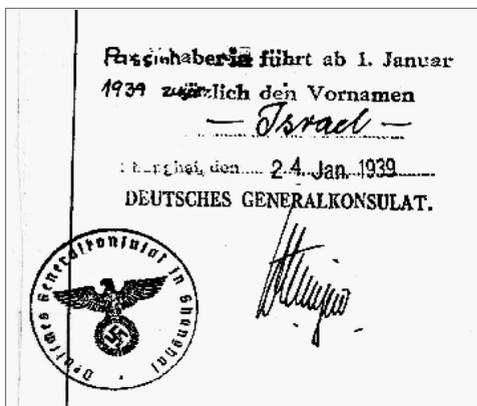
far as the treatment of the Jews was concerned. As a consequence of that pressure the Jewish refugees were squeezed into a limited part of Hongkew, just like a ghetto, and there they were subject to the repressive measures of the Japanese order police. The circumstances of daily life worsened dramatically. This was especially due to the fact that the financial support of international auxilliary organizations hardly reached the needy. In spite of these pityful conditions some of the cultural activities continued, and the majority of the refugees experienced in September of 1945 the end of the war. When in 1949 the communists marched into Shanghai the major part of the Jewish community of refugees was long since 'gone with the wind'.

Source: Internet "Zuflucht in Shanghai" - "Zur Geschichte" www.filmcasino.at/shanghai/
12k - 9. Juni 2004

The Misery was Enormous, and one had to Fight to get by

After arrival in Shanghai a local Jewish auxiliary organization took care of the refugees. There were a few well-to-do Sephardic Jews living in Shanghai, e. g. a certain Sir Victor Sassoon, and two others by the name of Kardoon and Hardoon. All three of them were British citizens, and they had established the auxiliary association.

First we were taken to a hostel of the auxiliary association which was located in a huge building. There we slept for a couple of nights on cots. Then some of us were taken to different homes which were kept operating by different auxiliary groups for years. Most of the refugees had a tough time, others were successfully providing for their sustenance, the latter were mainly the younger folks.



No sooner had Manfred arrived in Shanghai he had to apply for the "forced name" Israel at the German Consulate General. As of January 1, 1939 the Nazis had made it mandatory for male Jews to add "Israel" to their name.

Thanks be to God, since I belonged to the lucky ones, however, it was very difficult to pull oneself out of that miserable situation. In countries like the U.S.A., Brazil, Argentina or Australia one could wash dishes on day shift and then dress up for the night. There you were a gentleman anyway! In Shanghai this was not possible since menial work was done by Chinese coolies. It was totally unthinkable that a European would do such jobs.

One tried anything to make a living! E.g. selling fabric door to door or what have you. Many of the emigrants tried the offices of the foreign companies, the British, the Americans, and even the Germans. They were begging for jobs like selling fabric door to door or something else.

Both my brother and I had had our jobs with the textile branch in Germany. So, after a short period of time we joined forces with another gentleman by the name of Henze. He was German but not Jewish, however, since he was married to a Jewish lady he had emigrated with her because he loved her! Pretty soon we were able to lease a small business in a rather good location. Mr. Henze was a taylor by profession, and we were a perfect match.

It was to our advantage that wealthy Chinese assumed that they could get better quality products from European rather than from Chinese taylors. Considering everything we really got lucky! The majority of the Jewish emigrants lived in poverty hard to imagine.

Some of them had some money when they arrived and would for instance open a little restaurant where they sold buns and hot dogs and the likes. Only Jewish emigrants would do that thus trying to keep "afloat". Especially for intellectuals it was pretty tough to hold one's ground in the rough struggle for existence. The more educated a person was the worse that person was off, so it seemed.

There were professors for instance who were rather helpless and didn't know what to do with themselves in the middle of that chaos. E.g. I experienced in the house, to which I had moved later on, how one day a coresident from Berlin was carried out. He was close to death and totally gone to the dogs. I saw with my own eyes that he was covered with lice. The next day he passed away. He was a highly educated person!

Typhoid, malaria etc. were rather common and like the order of the day. Later on a Jewish congregation was established. There was a beautiful old Synagogue in town which in earlier years had been dedicated by a wealthy Sephardic Jew.

The misery, however, escalated to the point that it became insurmountable for the local Jews. It was totally impossible that they all of a sudden would have been able to take care of approximately 20000 refugees. Fortunately enough the monies of an American Jewish auxiliary organization, called HIAS would reach Shanghai via Switzerland even during the war. If it had not been for that people would have died like the flies. Homes for refugees would also be established with that money.

Except for the very first days my brother Theo and I didn't live in one of those homes. The two of us found a place to live in the "International Settlement", which considering the circumstances was rather decent.

Most of the refugees lived under miserable conditions.

In about 1940 Theo's wife joined us in Shanghai. So far everything went rather well, and we could make a living with our small textile business and taylor shop. However, due to the war in Europe enormous scarcities arose. The British were cut off, and the Japanese dominated everything anyway!

Theo's Death

Early in 1941 my brother Theo, who was a diabetic, fell severely ill, and in addition to diabetes he was stricken by tuberculosis. Considering the local conditions TB was common, and many Chinese were malnourished and suffered from that disease. Theo was admitted to the hospital, and there he died in June 1941.

For me this was a terrible blow since he as the elder brother was also a person I held on to in those difficult times. Unfortunately I never was at good terms with Theo's wife Bertl. I don't even recall what happened to her.

I think she emigrated. Anyway, soon after Theo's death she sold the business. Theo already had a visa for the U.S.A. where my two other brothers had settled in the meantime.

My mother, too, made it on one of the last ships to the U.S.A. via Portugal. Theo as the elder brother was supposed to follow first then I. By the way, after the war I wasn't able anymore to visit Theo's burial site since the entire Jewish cemetery had been leveled in order to built highrise buildings.

A relative of Theo's wife by the name of Regina Nass lived at the time in Shanghai. She was very concerned about me, and so without my knowledge in July of 1941 she wrote a letter to my brothers in New York. She informed them about my very terrible situation and asked them to support me financially. However, due to the worsening political situation in Shanghai this didn't come true anymore.

Shanghai 27.7.41.

An die Gebrüder Braunschweiger I

Von Ihrer lb. Frau Mutter werden Sie schon öfters meinen Namen ~~ganz~~ gehört haben und sicher auch von lb. Theo und Manfred. Ich erlaube mir nun persönlich an Sie einige Zeilen zu richten. Ich weiss dass der lb. Manfred Ihnen vom Todesfall des lb. Theo berichtet hat, der auch mir sehr Nahe gegangen ist, da ich ihm wie eine Schwester zugetan war. In diesem Sinne spreche ich Ihnen mein herzliches Beileid aus. Ich weiss dass Sie sehr an g'tts. Theo gegangen haben, aber nach alldem was er gelitten ist ihm die Ruhe zu gönnen. Nun hat sich die Situation durch diesen Fall für den lb. Manfred vollständig geändert, den die Bertl wird nach Ihrem Zurückkommen aus Dairen das Geschäft verkaufen wodurch Manfred existenzlos wird. Da der lb. Manfred und die Bertl sich in keiner Weise verstehen, kann von einen Zusammenarbeiten keine Rede sein. Nachdem ich dem lb. Manfred wie eine Schwester zugetan bin und deshalb sehr um seine Zukunft besorgt bin, sehe ich keinen anderen Ausweg als ohne wissen des lb. Manfred an Sie zu schreiben. Obzwar der lb. Manfred sehr rührig ist und sich in keiner Weise unterkriegen lassen wird, wird es für ihn sehr schwer sein seinen Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen, denn hier in Shanghai ist es nicht so wie in Amerika wo man irgend

eine Arbeit annehmen kann, den die Europaer sind auf kaufmannische Tätigkeit angewiesen. Ich weiss, dass Sie den Ib. Manfred sehr zugetan sind und ich wäre nicht so besorgt wenn nicht gerade durch die kras- sen Massnahmen der letzten Tage bezüglich China Japan von denen Sie sicher orientiert sind fast alles unmöglich geworden ist. Zudem muss man in Shanghai durch das sehr schlechte Klima sehr gut leben gegen die hiesigen Krankheiten geschützt zu sein. Deshalb halte ich es für meine Pflicht Sie als ältere Brüder zu bitten, laufend dem Ib. Manfred geldliche Zuwendungen zu machen. Ich würde es sogar für ratsam halten wenn es Ihnen möglich ist, ihm auf einmal einen grösseren Betrag zu schicken, da die Gefahr besteht, dass Geldsendungen nach China vollkommen unterbunden werden, was durch die letzten politischen Massnahmen durchaus möglich ist.

Der Ib. Manfred hat sich sehr zu seinen Vorteil verändert, manches hübsche junge Mäd- el wäre glücklich ihn zu bekommen, er hätte auch die Möglichkeit sich gut zu verheiraten trotz seiner Jugend, aber sein einziges Bestreben ist zu seiner Ib. Mutter und zu seinen Brüdern nach Amerika zu kommen.

In der angenehmen Erwartung dass Sie meine Zeilen bei bester Gesundheit antreffen begrüsse ich Sie aufs herzlichste leider noch unbekannt

Yhr
Regina Nass

Translation of Mrs. Nass' letter to 'the Braunschweiger brothers'

To: The Braunschweiger Brothers

Your dear mother has most likely quite often mentioned my name to you, and Theo and Manfred might have done so too. I am taking the liberty to personally write a few lines to you. I know that dear Manfred notified you of dear Theo's death. His passing touched me very deeply since I had fond sisterly feelings for him. I extend my most sincere sympathy to you. I know how much you loved him, however, after all he had to suffer through may he rest in peace.

With Theo's death everything has changed for Manfred entirely, since Bertl is going to sell the business after she gets back from Dairen (a town near

Shanghai) thus leaving Manfred without means to support himself. Manfred and Bertl just can't see eye to eye, and there is no way they could work together.

Now, since I am like a sister to him and care for his future I see no other way out but writing to you without his knowledge.

Although Manfred is a very active man who will not allow circumstances to get him down, it will be very difficult for him to make a living. Shanghai is not the U.S.A. where one may take on any kind of a job, here the Europeans have to be business people. I know you love Manfred, and I wouldn't be concerned about him if it were not for the recently enacted tough measures/regulations regarding relations between China and Japan of which you might have heard. These measures make almost everything impossible. Besides one has to live quite well around here in order to protect oneself from all the diseases due to the bad climate.

Therefore I feel obligated to ask you as Manfred's older brothers to regularly support him financially.

I even think it's advisable to transfer a rather large sum of money at one time if that is possible for you, because the danger is real that money transfers to China will be totally terminated. Considering the latest political measures this really might happen.

Dear Manfred has changed quite a bit to his advantage! There'd be definitely some nice young girls who'd be happy to date him. In spite of his youth he would have the possibility to marry up, however, his whole endeavor is to come to his dear mother and his brothers to America. I hope my letter reaches you in good health! Although we haven't met yet I send my most heartfelt greetings,

Sincerely yours

Now, here I was totally on my own, and my visa was the only thing on my mind. I wanted to be with my family in New York as soon as possible. Alas, on Dec. 7, 1941 the Japanese - American - War broke out. The Japanese had attacked the US Navy Base at Pearl Harbour, and on the same day they also invaded Shanghai. Ever since their attack on China in 1937 the Japanese occupied an outpost in the town district called Hongkew which had been considerably damaged during the fighting.

Since it was the cheapest neighborhood many Jewish refugees lived there. For me all this was absolutely devastating! Now I was completely cut off from my family, and all of a sudden the Japanese had become the 'big makers'.

"Braun Trading Corporation"

One day - it may very well have been before Dec.7, 1941 - I happened to meet a Japanese by the name of Ito who used to be a customer at our textile shop. He owned a rather large Export-Import Co. in Shanghai. Ever since 1937 the Japanese controlled and dominated everything, so that members of other nationalities could hardly do business anymore. Anyway, I got to talking with Mr. Ito and presented him my idea to start a brokerage under my name since the Chinese were afraid to deal directly with the Japanese. He went for it, bought a small office in town and we established Braun Trading Corporation. I myself was acting as a middleman.

For a young fellow like me it really was something to have an office of my own, especially during those chaotic times.

All along I had been quite impressed with the foreign companies in Shanghai. Actually, I was quite taken by their presence and had been dreaming for some time of getting involved with the import - export business.

I continued educating myself by taking a course in typing for business people, studied English and later on even some Russian and Japanese. By the way, I was one of the few who also studied Chinese. All of this was very much to my advantage in business life. Even today I am still able to communicate some in Chinese, very much to the surprise of Chinese business partners.

Residence 93 Wayside	53161
Braun Trading Corp..	14801 11980
131 Museum	
Braun Walter Dr 80 Kwenming	52045
Braunschweiger Theodor 232A G de Bszon	79660
Brauquier L 213B Card Mercier	76427
Brauweiler F 1245 Bourgeat	72321

Manfred Braunschweiger went by the name of Braun since for the Chinese and Japanese this was much easier to pronounce.

上海特種院路一三一號電話三二〇 勃郎貿易公司 司	BRAUN TRADING CORPORATION			
	131 MUSEUM ROAD, ROOM 320 SHANGHAI, CHINA		TEL 14801 11980	
		Shanghai, _____		
INVOICE of _____				
Goods shipped for account & risk of _____		Invoice No. _____		
Messrs. _____		Contract No. _____		
		Your Order No. _____		
Per S/S _____		Sailing on _____		
From _____		to _____		
Insured for _____		with _____		
Mark & No.	Quantity	Description	Price @	Amount

Letterhead of an invoice form of the "Braun Trading Corporation"

Starting this brokerage was so far so good! However, Mr. Ito would never show up at the office. He had his own big trade office in Shanghai and left me entirely in charge of the brokerage. The main job was the transaction of business deals, and all sorts of stock -stored goods- moved back and forth since due to the war hardly anything could be imported.



February 1942- Mr. Ito and his partner M. Braun(schweiger), both seated at the front, with employees (standing at the left Mr. Koda), below 3 Chinese coworkers of the Braun Trading Corporation.

14th Jan, 1942.

Dear Mr. Braun,

Yesterday you told me to come to your office, and after questioning me, you will know I am an honest boy. And besides I have no bad habit.

As I am a school boy, I have no experience in commerce, therefore you must excuse me.

Since you know I am an unexperienced boy, so that you must teach me the commercial knowledge in order to make me a man of full experience.

As I did not talk with any foreigners, and that is why I become very afraid when you asked me yesterday.

Now I give the following terms, so that you may know my standard in English.

I have studied English for three years. I can either type or write and telephone calls.

As to the salary, you may give me at your own choice.

Please tell me the office hours in your company, so that I may attend there according to the time schedule table.

Waiting for your favourable reply at your earliest convenience,

Yours sincerely,
Ting Tang Tang.

Job application of the young Chinese fellow by the name of Ting Tang Tang asking Mr. Braun(schweiger) for employment (in the picture on the previous page this young fellow is the 3rd from the left)

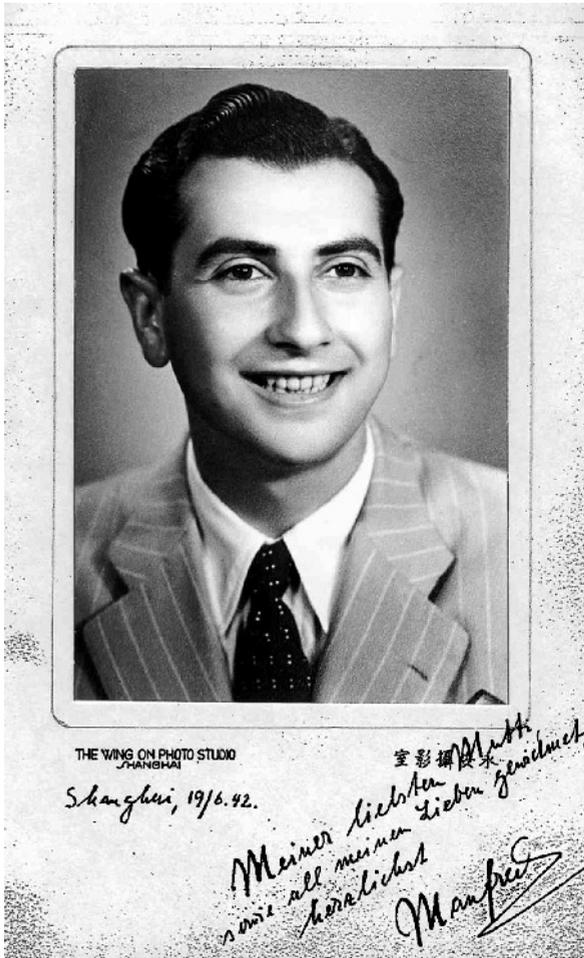


Photo featuring Manfred Braunschweiger, June 1942 in Shanghai

Now, here I sat in this office with my Chinese employees, but only very few deals would materialize.

My Japanese partner was only concerned with his Import-Export-Co. and didn't show up. It just didn't work this way!

Lo and behold one day I happened to meet a lady who had worked for the American Consulate which had been closed ever since the war broke out on Dec. 7, 1941. Very spontaneously she said to me: "What a shame, you almost would have received your visa." Now she was being repatriated by the Japanese, which meant they were sending her back to the U.S.A. So I asked her: 'Could you do me a favor and loan me a couple of hundred dollars? That would really help me right here and now since all of my family lives in the U.S.A., and I am here all by myself.'

One dollar was a lot of money back then! I meant to give that lady a few pieces of my personal clothes to take to the States as ID for my relatives, but she didn't even want that. She really loaned me the money which was very generous and helped me quite a bit. Now I had a chance to separate myself from that Japanese and try something else.

After I had fired and paid off Mr. Ito, which by the way took a lot of courage, I tried to use my seed money and switch "Braun Trading Corporation" to a new line of products.

Foodstuff was tremendously scarce, e.g. butter could nowhere be had. That gave me the idea to produce lard! I lived in a house of the International Settlement, and in the basement of that house I managed with the help of one employee and very primitive means to start producing hog lard. I bought hog fat which we rendered in a kettle, and the result was:

'Braun's Pure Lard'!

I advertised our new product heavily, even big time on the air via a British radio station. I signed a contract with the radio station to go on the air with my lard ad from January 18 to April 17, 1943 from 06.15pm to 06.30pm. I think I might have been the only emigrant to risk something like that. Of course it cost a lot of money but it paid off. I offered the lard to the grocery stores, and they sold it as a butter replacement. Neatly filled into jars it really looked impressive. My employee supplied the customers by bicycle.

ADVERTISING ORDER

by RADIO STATION X.M.H.A. **X M H A** No 163
448 RACE COURSE ROAD
 SHANGHAI, CHINA.

THE CALL OF THE ORIENT

You are hereby authorized to broadcast upon the air my/our advertising matter RE: PURE LARD
AND/OR OTHER PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED BY US
 for a period of THREE MONTH during the hours 6.15 P.M. to 6.30 P.M. for which I/we agree to pay the RADIO STATION X.M.H.A. the sum of ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED Dollars being the total sum of the contract and payable as follows: AS ARRANGED

Contract begins JANUARY 18, 1943 Contract ends APRIL 17, 1943

You are also hereby authorized to decline for me/us _____ contracts or artists, for the purpose of putting our programmes on the air for which I/we agree to pay _____ Dollars extra in advance for a period of _____

Name of Salesman _____
 Accepted by Manager [Signature]
 Date JANUARY 16, 1943

BRAUN TRADING CORPORATION
 Full Name [Signature]
 Signed and Chop. _____
 Address _____

This order contains the entire Contract.

NOTE:—RADIO STATION X. M. H. A. retains the full right of Censorship regarding all matters broadcasted.

Letterhead of the contract which Manfred signed with the British radio station X.M.H.A. The total cost was 1500 Chinese dollars to be paid as agreed on.

Radio Station X.M.H.A.
Shanghai/China.

BRAUN TRADING CORPORATION

1.

For the next 15 minutes, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will be entertained through the courtesy of the Braun Trading Corporation, Manufacturers of Braun's Pure Lard.

There are many brands of lard on the local market, but Braun's Pure Lard comes to you packed under most sanitary conditions, in glass jars. Braun's Pure Lard is recommended for spreading on bread, just like butter or margerine. It tastes better than margerine and it is very nourishing.

Braun's Pure Lard is obtainable at all leading provision and department stores. So be sure to get a jar of this delicious product tomorrow and remember to look for the name "Braun", spelled BRAUN on the label.

Tonight Braun's Pure Lard presents vocals of

Manfred's first advertisement for "Braun's Pure Lard" on X.M.H.A. Radio

The lard enterprise was quite successful and I made some good money with it. However, in February 1943 a proclamation was issued stipulating that all aliens -stateless persons- had to move to a certain district, a ghetto after all ! It was a pretty much shot up part of town.



Label of the first new product of the "Braun Trading Corporation": Pure lard

3.

In closing the Braun program of light music we remind you that Braun's Lard is the Lard for you... the lard your family will enjoy when spread on bread ... or ... when used in cooking.

Add distinction to your cuisine by displaying a bottle of Braun's Lard on your kitchen shelf.

Braun ... spelled B R A U N ... is the trademark to look for when you purchase lard.

Braun's Lard is obtainable at a l l leading department and grocery stores. Attractively packed in glass jars with air-tight screw top Braun's Lard is the lard for Shanghaianders.

Remember to tune in again tomorrow evening for another Braun program.

Destroyed Existence and a New Start Inside the Ghetto

This was an order for all refugees whose passports had not been extended, and to none of the Jews extensions had been granted. However, there were also some people who were not Jewish, e.g. quite a number of spouses who had not divorced as the NAZIS demanded but rather emigrated with their Jewish spouses.

International newspapers published the proclamation which had been issued by the Japanese Armed Forces. According to it all aliens -stateless persons- who had arrived in Shanghai since 1937 had to move to a closedoff part of town.



It was especially the Jewish emigrants who were hit by it. According to the orders of the Japanese occupation forces all the Japanese who lived within the Ghetto district had to vacate their housing and make it available to the alien stateless refugees.

Proclamation in the international newspapers

Proclamation concerning Restriction on Residence and Business of Stateless Refugees

(I) Due to military necessity places of residence and business of stateless refugees in the Shanghai area shall hereafter be restricted to the undermentioned area in the International Settlement.

**East of the line connecting Chaoufoong Road;
Muirhead Road and Dent Road;
West of Yangtsepoo Creek;
North of the line connecting East Seward Road;
Muirhead Road and Wayside Road; and
South of the boundary of the International Settlement.**

(II) The stateless refugees at present residing and/or carrying on business in the districts other than the above area shall remove their places of residence and/or business into the area designated above by May 18, 1943.

Permission must be obtained from the Japanese authorities for the transfer, sale purchase or lease of the rooms, houses, shops of any other establishments, which are situated outside the designated area and are now being occupied or used by stateless refugees.

~~(III) Persons other than stateless refugees shall not remove into the area mentioned in Article I without permission of the Japanese authorities.~~

(IV) Persons who violate this Proclamation or obstruct its enforcement shall be liable to heavy penalties.

Commander-in-Chief of the
Imperial Japanese Army in the Shanghai Area.

Commander-in-Chief of the
Imperial Japanese Navy in the Shanghai Area.

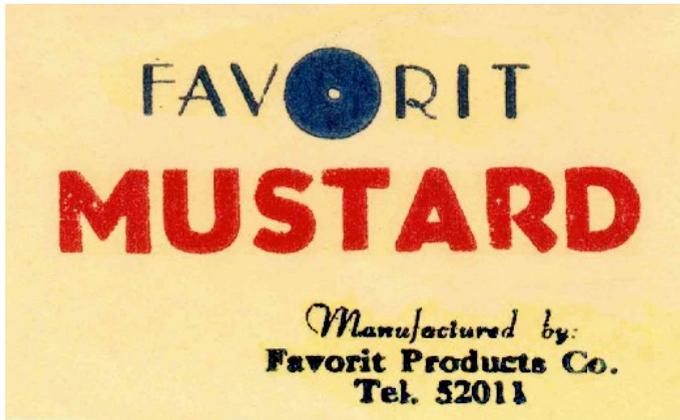
The Ghetto was located next to a rather large district with Japanese inhabitants, and some of them still owned a house in this Ghetto district. Of course, Chinese had been living here for ever and most of them continued living here. They were allowed to move freely between the Ghetto and the rest of town. Now, however, since thousands of emigrants were being added to the population there was an indescribable overcrowding and one hardly could find a place to live. Since there wasn't sufficient housing available many Jews had to move into a most primitive camp of huts.

This time again I lucked out: I was friends with a Japanese fellow by the name of Koda (photo page 27 on the left) who was working for my former business partner Mr. Ito. Mr. Koda kind of admired me for firing Mr. Ito. My friend happened to own a house within the Ghetto district, and he took me in without asking me to pay the usual key-money, which was very nice of him indeed. After the war I had a chance to help him at a time when all the Japanese were being repatriated by the Chinese. By the way he had ten girls and one boy!

Anyway, I rent a room in Mr. Koda's house. The office in town I had to give up without being paid one cent. For me this meant the destruction of my existence which I had worked for so hard.

I tried a new start inside the Ghetto district. I was lucky and within a short period of time I was able to rent a little shop. I resumed the production of hog lard and in addition to it I produced several kinds of jam and fruitjuices under the name of 'Favorite Products'.



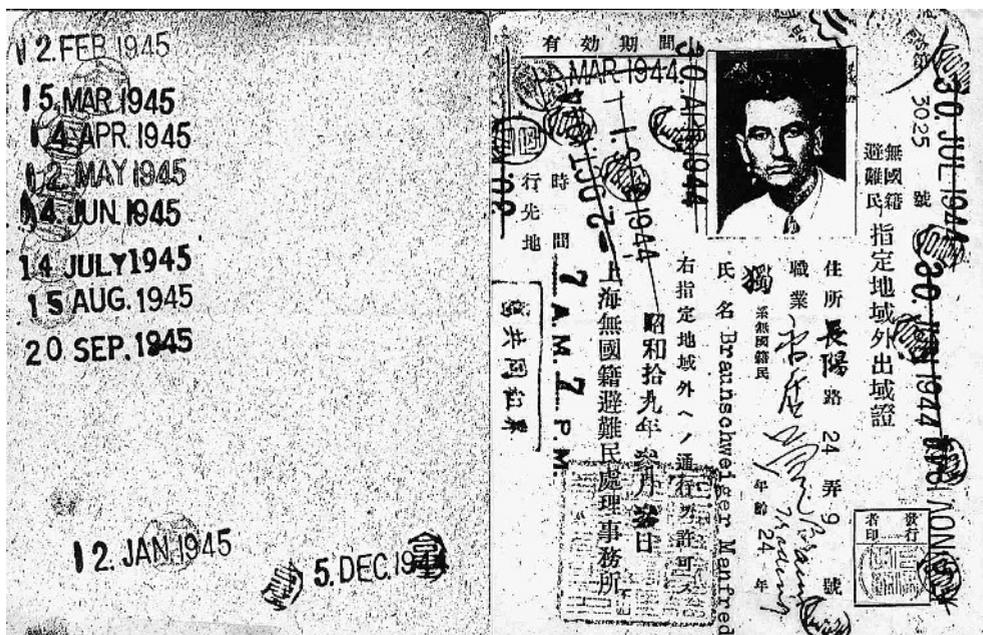


All this was quite difficult since the Japanese were very strict. One day I met a German emigrant who was a 'mustard specialist'. I hired him for my small business and so we produced as one more item of the 'Favorate Products' line a delicious mustard.

Occasionally there were performances of a variety of plays offered in this Ghetto district with rather renowned actors and actresses performing. E.g. musicals like "Die Lustige Witwe" -the jolly widow- were part of the program. During the intermission of such performances the attending public was thirsty, of course, and my "Sunny-Juice" was sold by the glass at a separate table. I don't recall exactly but most likely I myself sold drinks as did my coworker and others.



With the German text Manfred Braunschweiger intended to especially recommend the "Sunny Fruitjuice" to the German emigrants.



Ghetto ID 1944/45 for Manfred Braunschweiger. Showing the stamp and listing the district to be visited the ID was valid for a month's between 07 am and 07 pm

As Jews we were only permitted to leave the Ghetto during daytime showing a special ID. This ID was valid for one month. Once I purchased raw material -ingredients- at the market prior to the time permitted, and if they had caught me at that it could have spelled quite some trouble for me, dire consequences so to speak.



ID tag with Chinese characters (may pass) - a sort of a "Star of David" - which Manfred had to wear as he left the Ghetto as well as on the outside.

Mr. Goja, a crazy, evil spirited Japanese ran the Ghetto. If an extension of the Ghetto ID was due one had to stand in line at his office. He'd let you stand in line for hours or days even during a severe hot spell, and was it ever hot in Shanghai during summertime. If someone was good looking it made him extra mad. He would sit on his chair and say: "I am the king of the Jews!" He would slap your face at times or beat you up, that was pretty normal. It continued this way until the war was over.

Outside the Ghetto we had to wear on the lapel a little tin badge with Chinese characters. I don't recall what the characters meant in German, at any rate this badge was supposed to identify us as Jews.

Of course, the Japanese had been instigated by the Nazis to give such orders, I don't think they would have done it on their own.

During the war Jews between the age of 20 to 45 had to serve as auxilliary police at the Ghetto exits. Every other week it was my term. They gave me an armband of the PAO CHIA Police, and then I had to work as a guard at the exit and check the Ghetto IDs of the passer-bys.



Manfred Braunschweiger's armband as auxilliary police deput of the Jewish department of the "Foreign Pao Chia"

Marriage in the Ghetto of Changhai

In October of 1944 I got married to Hansi Freund, the daughter of a physician from Vienna. She and her parents were refugees like myself, and I met her while attending classes in Japanese. Hansi had a rather secure job with a Swiss Insurance Co. outside the Ghetto district.

One day after class a Chinese introduced me to an attractive young lady who was attending a different course in Japanese, and who was an emigrant from Vienna/Austria. Well, that's the way it all started with my wife. After we got married we continued to live upstairs in the house of the Japanese fellow. In the meantime the house had been sold to a Chinese person. There was neither shower nor bathtub, and the toilet was downstairs.



What a nice-looking couple: Manfred Braunschweiger and Hansi nee Freund

However, compared to other houses it was quite acceptable. The toilet was almost miraculous! The majority of houses inside the Ghetto didn't have toilets at all. People would use chamber pots, and in the morning they'd be emptied by a special service, so called 'toilet wagons'. Everything was very primitive indeed!



Marriage certificate in Chinese - Wedding reception at the Café Roy. - Witnesses at the wedding ceremony were the emigrants Wilhelm Jedwab, Hellmut Zernik and Dr. Karl Langer.

Receipt No. 2297

Shanghai, July 5th 1945

RECEIVED from Mr. Braun "SUNNY" Company

Dollars One Hundredthousand only \$ 100,000.-

in payment of Invoice No. 2297 for One spot announcement

in the German-English Programme commencing JULY 5th ending
July AUGUST 5th, according to agreement.

RADIO STATION X.M.H.A.
 上海馬路四四五號
 東亞放送局

Fuji

(Seal)

500

Shanghai

X. M. H. A.
 "The Call of the Orient"

445 Race Course Road.

30 K.C.

Manfred Braunschweiger was quite successful with his grocery business. As a business person he continued to call himself Braun. Again he risked much money for a one month radio advertisement to promote his Sunny Products as the above receipt proves. The "Sunny" ads were run by the German - English program of radio station X.M.H.A. from July 5 to August 5, 1945.

The War is over - Peace at last

September 1945 (Sept. 2nd Japan signs the unconditional surrender) - the war is over! Nevertheless I still continued with my business for some time since it would take a while with the visas. In Shanghai it was very difficult to get the visa because there was such a high demand. There were thousands of people who wanted to get out of Shanghai.

But after some time I quit my business, and my wife and I worked for the US Army. When things didn't move along as far as the visa was concerned we were fortunate to be transferred to Peking the capital, where part of the US Army was stationed.

Just as we had hoped for we'd receive our visas here pretty soon. Back then the Americans were politically very active, and although the war was over they attempted to reconcile nationalists and communists. It was at that time when civil war started ever so slowly.

After we finally and luckily obtained our visas we sailed on a troop-ship from Shanghai to New York to meet my family.

New Beginning in the U.S.A.

After we finally and luckily obtained our visas we sailed on a troop-ship from Shanghai to New York to meet my family. As of that time regular passenger traffic had not been resumed yet. Of course, back then it was even quite difficult in the US to get started all over again. At first I landed a job with an Import-Export Co., later on I worked with a different outfit. My brothers worked as upholsterers in the furniture business, but they were not much of a help to me.

Also, back in 1947 it wasn't easy in New York to find housing, and again one had to pay 'keymoney'. Anyway, initially we stayed at my mother's until we moved into our own place. However, we had to move to a terrible district, the then notorious South-Bronx.

Although I felt pretty close with the company I worked for all those years the manager was a little jealous of me. No doubt I had accomplished quite a bit! One day, however, we separated on friendly terms and I started my own business.

The Shanghai business name Braun was changed to the English Brown, however, since there were pages of Browns in the telephone book I eventually called myself Browning. I literally started from scratch and worked like crazy, neither observing Saturday nor Sunday. In order to promote and extend my business and prevail in spite of the tough competition I had to be on the go at all times, establish new contacts and win customers.

I travelled the 'whole world', established new and good sometimes even personal business relationships. Back then we weren't that mobile yet, and air connections were not as branched out and numerous as nowadays.

Therefore it was inevitable that I was gone from home for weeks mostly even months. My three daughters who were born in 1949, 1956, and 1960 respectively didn't see much of their dad, and I missed out on much of the joy to watch them grow up, which retrospectively makes me feel ever so sorry. Yet, this was the price I had to pay for my professional success, so it seems.

My Import-Export Co. specialized in industry chemicals developed over the years into big business with good reputation at home and abroad."



• Warehouse Locations

B **BROWNING**
CHEMICAL CORPORATION
707 WESTCHESTER AVE. • WHITE PLAINS, NY 10604-3104
TEL.: (914) 686-0300 • (800) 771-0008 • FAX: (914) 686-0310

Mr. Braunschweiger's 'Browning Chemical Corporation' leading the supply of chemical products advertises by pledging outstanding performance coast to coast in different warehouses.

FREDERICK M. BROWNING
PRESIDENT

B **BROWNING** CHEMICAL CORPORATION
707 WESTCHESTER AVENUE - WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. 10604 (914) 686-0300
FAX: 914 686-0310 TELEX: RCA 23 5039 ITT-42 0970 WUI-62 595

Epilogue

Shanghai in 1938 was the place of refuge for Manfred Braunschweiger from the murderous Nazi persecution. However, he also recognized it as a chance which he creatively and prudently exploited, though according to his own judgment he was an exception, almost a "miracle-kid" since almost all of the emigrants fared rather miserably.

It was, to be sure, in the U.S.A. - his new homeland - where Frederick M. Browning became the successful business man through untiring hard work. "Nothing happened all by itself" as he used to say. In the meantime Mr. Browning sold part of the company and moved to a smaller office in the same area.

The Brownings have been living for quite some time in a very nice residential area close to New York. Long since do the three daughters have their own families, and they also help out some in Dad's business. The boss, however, shows up at the office every day (2009) to check on things!

Originally it was planned that Fred should have this little booklet for his birthday on 21st April 2012. In the meantime it is already June now that the book is finished and I intended to give it to him as a belated present.

However, as things sometimes go in life: Man proposes, God disposes.

On Saturday, 26th May, Frederick M. Browning died at the age of 93 after a life of many ups and downs, yet a life fulfilled and successful. I am sure he would have appreciated this little booklet since he was always very keen on seeing his unique story documented.

So I dedicate these pages to my dear friend Fred, who once saw the light of day as Manfred Braunschweiger in my native village Burghaun and whom I feel deeply attached to in sisterly affection.

Burghaun in June 2012
Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert



Mr. and Mrs. Browning with their three daughters - The photo was taken during the official reception for the Browning family by "Marktgemeinde Burghaun" in March 2004.

Appendix

(A poem in German)

Gedicht zum 80. Geburtstag von Fred am 21. April 1999

Lieber Fred ...

Zu Deinem Ehrentag, gib acht,
hab ich Dir ein Gedicht gemacht -
ein Blick zurück auf dieses Nest,
in dem Du einst ein Kind gewest.
Hier sind die Wurzeln Deines Lebens,
all Deines Schaffens, Deines Strebens.
Sollst haben dran ein wenig Freud'
an Deinem Wiegenfeste heut'.

*

Vor 80 Jahren in Burghaun
tat'st Du das Licht der Welt erschaun.
Frau Ritta und der David stolz -
vier Söhne waren's nun, was solls!
Vier stramme Burschen, ein Quartett -
die Viererbande war komplett!
Zu Milian, Theo, Norbert, gelle
kam nun Klein-Manfred als Geselle.

*

Das Leben eilte friedlich heiter,
von einem Jahr zum andern weiter,
bis Manfred in die Schule kam,
wo Lehrer Berlinger ihn nahm.
Dort hieß es Lesen, Rechnen, Schreiben,
auch auf Hebräisch Studien treiben.
Das alles flog dem Manfred zu,
die Volksschulzeit verfloss im Nu.

*

Im Kopf des Kleinen war viel Grütze,
das sagt uns seine Schülmütze.
Er fuhr nach Hünfeld täglich hin,
denn zu was Höherem stand sein Sinn.
Der Stadt Lateinschul' war sein Ziel,
dort wollte er noch lernen viel.
Und bis zum Jahre vierunddreißig
war Manfred in der Schule fleißig.

*

Nun stand er da, der flotte junge Mann
und fragte sich: Was fang ich an?
Und die Entscheidung die er trifft?
Zum Kaufhaus Wertheim hin als Stift! -
Hin und zurück gings täglich mit dem Zug,
doch abends, klar, war's ihm alsdann genug.
Da nahm er lebenslustig und galant
beim Tanz die Damen an der Hand.

*

Ach, im November dann zum Guten Ort
trug man den Vater David fort.
Still ruht er hier auf heimatlichem Feld,
ihm blieb erspart die Nazi-Welt! -
Schon ein Jahr vorher Schurken schwirrten
und in dem Dorf manch' Fenster klirrten.
Der braune Terror rings tat sprießen,
manche Hoffnung sollt' zerfließen.

*

War'n all die Jahre friedlich, heiter,
ging's nun im braunen Farbton weiter.
Denn Nazis hatten festgestellt:
Der Jud' taugt nichts auf dieser Welt!
Drum gab's die Arier - Herrenrasse!
Der Manfred war jetzt Unterklasse.
"Kristallnacht"- "Buchenwald" - Befehl zum Tor!
Oh, welch ein Engel stand davor! -

*

Per Schiff ans End' der Welt gebracht,
bis China gings, wer hätt' das je gedacht,
nach Schanghai hin mit all den Plagen.
Dein Bruder half beim Durchsichschlagen.
Als Theo starb, das war ein herber Schlag,
denn Halt war er für Dich, ganz ohne Frag'!
Du hieltest durch in all dem Trubel,
fand'st Deine Hansi, welch ein Jubel!

*

Der Krieg war endlich dann beendet,
zum Bessern hatte sich das Blatt gewendet.
Vorbei der Terror, Not und Mißgeschick,
zu Deinen Lieben kehrtest Du alsbald zurück.
Und wieder musstest Neues Dir erringen,
doch jung und fleißig, so konnt' es gelingen.
Ein Töchter-Trio schenkte Hansi Dir,
einmal was andres, als der Söhne vier!

*

Dein Leben in Amerika -
Es war nicht leicht, doch lohnend, klar.
Burghaun - wahrhaftig nicht zu preisen!
Doch kamst Du her auf Deinen Reisen.
Nicht nur der Friedhof zog Dich her,
in Deiner Seele schlummert mehr.
So traf ich Dich vor just zehn Jahren,
von deinem Leben zu erfahren.

*

Angestammte Heimat, einst sichrer Hort,
sie jagte Dich kaltschneuzig fort!!
Nur angedeutet und nicht breit
Wollt' bedichten ich die braune Zeit.
Zwar meinst Du, Fred, in Deinem Herzen
tat'st Du die Zeit -, dies Dorf-, verschmerzen.
Allein - da ist ein kleiner wunder Fleck.
Der geht wohl nimmer wieder weg.

*

Doch heute ist ein Grund zum Fröhlichsein!
Ich stimm' aus Fern ins Hoch der Gäste ein!
Zum Wohl !! Durch Fleiß und unablässig Streben
schufst Dir Erfolg und Glück im Leben. -
Ja, lieber Fred, auch wenn man Dich viel jünger schätzt,
wirst Du heut 80, bist ein "Grufti" (*) jetzt.
Trittst Du nun langsam - so sei nicht verwundert,
wenn Du durch Gottes Güte schaffst die 100.

*

*Diese "Knittelverse" schrieb Dir Deine personifizierte Brücke zur
alten Heimat - in Freundschaft und verbunden mit allen guten
Wünschen für Dein und Deiner Familie weiteres Wohlergehen! **



On the initiative of Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert a commemorative plaque was consecrated at Burghaun castle yard in remembrance of the Jewish community and her victims in the Shoa on July 10, 1994.

Annotations

Anmerkung zum Gedicht:

Zu älteren Leute sagen hier die jungen frechen Kids und Twens spaßeshalber "Grufti" - soll heißen, dass ein älterer Mensch dem Grab, der Gruft, schon etwas näher steht als er selbst.

Related sources:

1. Interviews and dialogues of the author with Frederick M. Browning in the years 1986 until about 2002
2. Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert: Jüdisches Leben im Hünfelder Land - Juden in Burghaun, Verlag Michael Imhof, Petersberg 2008

Record of the pictures:

1. The photos on the pages 7 - 10 as well as 55 and 59: Collection Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert
2. The figures and photos on the pages 4, 12, 17 (Jan.2,1940), 18, 19 (total view of Burghaun), 20, 22 (synagogue) - 25 and all the color photos can be found as copies or as originals in the collection of Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert.
3. All the remaining photos and documents are in the private property of the Frederick M. Browning family and as well as copies in the collection of Elisabeth Sternberg-Siebert.