

**A Family Scattered: A Historical Exploration of a German/American
Family During WWII**
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Abstract

Karl Moller, an American citizen, was fifteen when the United States entered World War II and declared war on Germany. Karl was growing up in Germany with his great uncle Hermann when letters from the U.S. Consulate arrived urging him and his younger sister, Beatrice, to leave the country immediately. Despite this, Karl and Beatrice did not flee. In the midst of the Third Reich, Karl and Beatrice were fortunate to escape political persecution and internment through a lucky combination of a devoted German family and an unfortunate disease. The resulting situation leaves behind hundreds of letters between their father and Hermann and negotiations between Swiss and American consulates that paint a unique perspective of World War II and the challenges it brought to those living at that time.

Karl Moller was my grandfather, and this capstone is a result of years of learning about Karl and Beatrice since childhood. This project attempts to compile a historical narrative and answer the question: How did war and its after-effects influence and challenge a German-American family, and how does their story fit into the greater context of the world at that time? By investigating Karl Moller's life through letters, vital registration systems, photographs and interviews, one can construct a compelling case study of a German-American's transition into becoming a foreign enemy in his adopted homeland.

*With Special Thanks and Gratitude to
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Allie Mooney



Beatrice and Karl in Neuenstadt, Germany

Prologue

Although I have compiled the story of the Moller and Payer family in the following paper, the research, letters and findings that follow are not solely my own. This capstone belongs to the Moller/Payer family line and the generations that have worked to preserve the memory and history of the extraordinary circumstances encountered by its members during World War II. This paper would not exist without the particular efforts of Christian Payer, Karen Beatrice Miles, Linda Galaro, Susan Rogers, Lori Mooney and Sybille Payer.

The story began with a young German-American family. German-born husband and wife George and Sophie Moller, who had two children in Englewood, NJ: Karl in 1926 and Beatrice in 1928. Just a few years later, Sophie was diagnosed with tuberculosis, a deadly bacterial infection that primarily infects the lungs. For fear of Sophie infecting her children and knowing virtually no one in the United States, the couple decided to send 7-year old Karl and 5-year old Beatrice back to Germany, to stay with Sophie's brother: Hermann

Payer. The children enjoyed a German childhood up until 1941, when the United States entered WWII.

The events that followed reflected the challenges of being American citizens in an ‘enemy’ nation but the only home they really knew. Karl witnessed bombings and had to move out of Neuenstadt (his hometown) to avoid the political pressures of the Hitlerjuegend (Hilter Youth) and Beatrice contracted tuberculosis despite the family’s best efforts. How did Karl avoid the Hitler Youth? What were the consequences of harboring an American citizen for the Payer family? How did tuberculosis patients receive treatment during wartime? These are the questions left behind, and the questions this capstone explores.

Whenever I found my motivation slipping in undertaking such a massive and collaborative project, I would reach for one letter in the extensive collection of faded correspondence between the Moller and Payer family. The letter is dated March 7, 1949, and is a mere 19 lines. The letter announces the circumstances of Beatrice’s death.

“Beate is no more alive. A young woman—a superb person [member of the sanitarium staff]—as just Beate deserved it, was in her room and spoke on Beate’s request a prayer with her and she deceased without a struggle.¹”

She succumbed to tuberculosis at the age of 21, with her bottom three right ribs removed as the result of a thoracoplasty, a last-ditch procedure conducted on advanced tuberculosis patients. Beatrice died during the night in a sanitarium in Naroud, Switzerland, thousands of miles away from her surviving family members. Her greatest

¹ Payer, Frida to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 7 March 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

wish was to bring her father and brother together again, and with the end of WWII that dream had just begun to seem possible. Just three weeks before her death, Beatrice wrote to her surrogate family in Germany: “When I am over there, [in the US] we have to celebrate our reconciliation...”² Beatrice was an optimist and had dreams that were larger than the small sanitariums in which she spent half her life. The letter describing her death brings me to tears every time I read it.

Beatrice and Karl’s lives in Germany began with happy childhood years that abruptly shifted to years of separation, fear, disease and ultimately, death. This volume is for the Moller and Payer families, whose stories reflect the encompassing difficulties and sacrifices that war and disease can force upon a family. While examining the challenges of this international relationship, I have discovered that my family’s story is just a thread in the vast fabric of heartbreaking and harrowing stories coming from Europe, Asia and North America during the pre and post-war world. This collection of facts, letters and stories is a reflection on one family’s experience during one of the most defining periods of the past century, WWII.

My research attempts to answer the question: How did war and its after-effects influence and challenge a German-American family, and how does their story fit into the greater context of the world at that time? Through exploring this question, I will introduce the reader to first-person accounts of post-war life in Germany that have been preserved in the letters exchanged between Karl Moller and the Payer family. Through investigating Karl

² Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 14 February 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller's life, one can construct a compelling case study of a German-American's transition into becoming a foreign enemy in his adopted homeland.

To clearly depict Karl and Beatrice's stories, their lives can be divided into two segments: wartime and post-war time. While my family's documents and artifacts are primarily from the post-war period, there are sufficient letters and documents to provide an idea of their lives and the challenges during their time in Germany. Karl and Beatrice were vulnerable for different reasons during wartime and after. Karl was at-risk in the 1930's and 40's because he fit the Nazi regime's profile for the 'superior German race.' He was of age to participate in the Hitlerjugend and lived with a German family. To any observer, Karl would have appeared to be a German in every sense, except on paper. Once the war ended, Karl was particularly vulnerable due to his American citizenship in an environment that was increasingly anti-American.

Beatrice was vulnerable during the war because she had symptomatic tuberculosis, a condition that was considered 'asocial' by the Nazi health paradigm and often resulted in sterilization and social rejection.³ During Reconstruction, her enduring condition made her subject to the scarcities and prejudices that persisted after the war as she was given limited rations and treated as a German with TB. By analyzing the wartime and post-war periods of their lives, I shed light on the underlying context of their situation in Germany.

This capstone collects narratives and personal accounts from more than 100 letters that span the time frame of 1920-1970, although most focus is on letters from 1930-1950. In addition to these letters, vital registration documents and artifacts such as doctor's

³ Harsch, Donna. "Medicalized Social Hygiene? Tuberculosis Policy in the German Democratic Republic," *Bulletin of Historical Medicine* (2012) 86: 394-423 accessed March 5, 2013

reports, photographs and passports were used to create an accurate picture of the family's condition during those points of time. Additionally, this paper draws from a span of published histories and personal narratives for context and structure. Scholarly articles on tuberculosis and military enlistment also were consulted. Primary sources were evaluated with sensitivity to inherent bias of personal experience and opinion and were cross-referenced.

Overall, this project strives to honor the memory of the Moller and Payer families while also contributing their story to the vast historical record on WWII. This research also has a therapeutic effect, as the descendants of Karl have the opportunity to learn about Karl's early life and therefore better understand the man, husband and father he came to be.



A photo taken of the Moller sisters and Payer family together in Neuenstadt in 2005 in front of the family home

THE 1920's

Chapter 1: The American Dream

In order to properly understand Karl's journey, one must begin with the marriage of his parents in Neuenstadt, Germany on October 1, 1921.⁴ The marriage between Sophie Payer and George Moller was arranged through existing family ties. George Moller was born in 1882 in Billwerder, which is today a suburb of Hamburg. Previously, he was married to a young woman whose identity is unknown. The circumstances of the short marriage are unclear except that it ended with divorce. Sophie's aunt, Marie Bender, was married to Carl Moller, George's cousin. Familial letters indicate George asked the couple to assist him in finding a wife. Marie contacted her sister, Mathilde Bender-Payer (Sophie's mother) and the marriage was arranged. This arrangement occurred quickly and the wedding was planned in about two months.

Immediately after the wedding, George and Sophie immigrated to the United States for better work opportunities.⁵ Aboard the passenger ship *Hudson*, the couple arrived at Ellis Island on November 19, 1921. George and Sophie settled down in Tenafly, NJ, where George found a job as an architect. In letters to Germany, George expressed his wish to remain in the United States for about 5-10 years before moving back to Germany permanently to build a home on a plot of land entrusted to Sophie.⁶

George made at least three trips back to Germany early in the marriage. His departure dates are not available in the records we have, but due to record keeping at Ellis

⁴ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Island, one can pinpoint his arrival dates. He arrived back in the United States October 27, 1922, April 18, 1923 and August 1, 1924.⁷ Motivations behind these trips are unclear, but they could have been to continue business affairs and investments in Germany in preparation for their eventual return.

In early 1926, Sophie became pregnant with her first child, Karl. Karl was born in Englewood, NJ on December 5, 1926. Two years later, Beatrice was born in New Jersey on September 19, 1928. Sometime in August or September of 1931, the entire family made a trip to Germany, most likely to introduce Karl and Beatrice to their distant relatives living in Neuenstadt particularly Mathilde and her brother, Hermann Payer. The Moller family returned to the United States via ship: the *Deutschland* on October 9, 1931.⁸ Little did the family know that that trip would be a stark foreshadowing and preparation for what was to come.



Karl as a young boy wearing traditional lederhosen in the garden in Neuenstadt.

⁷ "George Moller," Passenger Record. *The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.* (2010, online database) Accessed 25 January 2013

⁸ New York Passenger List, 1820-1957: Karl Moller. *Ancestry.com* (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. 2010) Accessed 19 Feb. 2013

PREWAR (1930-1933)

Chapter 2: Everything Changes

Life continued as the children grew. Karl took his first steps, had his first day of elementary school and learned how to be a big brother. Beatrice had her hair braided by her mother and wore bows in her hair. The family enjoyed their garden and new home.

It was summertime in 1933 when everything changed. Sophie was diagnosed with tuberculosis, directly putting her children and husband at risk for infection. During the 1930's tuberculosis was still a great threat to public health, and it was common to send those afflicted with tuberculosis to sanitariums for 'cleaner air' and to prevent the spread of infection.⁹ Karl and Beatrice were seven and five respectively, and Sophie and George made the difficult decision to send their children back to Germany to live with Sophie's uncle, Hermann, whom they had visited with the children two years earlier. The Moller's decision to send their children away is still shrouded in conjecture. One hypothesis is that with Sophie receiving treatment for TB in a sanitarium, the children would need another full-time caretaker, an expense the young migrant family could not afford. Without any family in the United States, the best choice in terms of caring for the children was to send them to live with relatives in Germany.¹⁰ Karl and Beatrice traveled with their father to the port city of Bremerhaven, Germany and arrived September 1, 1933. In a letter dated October 3, 1933, Sophie is awaiting George's return as the children settled in Neuenstadt with Hermann. She wrote to her mother, Mathilde, reflecting on her treatment at a sanitarium not far from Tenaflly:

⁹ Mayer, Thomas and Gunther, Thurman. "Radical Currency Reform: Germany 1948" *Finance & Development* (March 1990) Accessed March 25, 2013

¹⁰ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

"The sanitarium, which is half an hour by car from here, is surrounded by fir trees. Nearby is a national farm, which supplies the sanitarium with all fresh provisions, primarily milk and eggs. When I am at home, I can come for examination as often as I want. A nurse picks me up and brings me home again by car. With every visit an X-ray examination is done. All of this is free, they care generously for sick people here.¹¹"

Additionally, Sophie reflected to her mother on the difficult decision of sending her children across the Atlantic to live with Hermann:

" From the beginning I had reservations to bring the kids to you because I thought the trouble would be too much at your age. But George preferred the solution because he wouldn't entrust the kids to people not in the family. Finally, I gave my consent since I thought the kids would bring a fresh atmosphere into the house and by this my disease would be of some use at least,¹²"

Sophie's anxiety about sending her children to Germany is understandable in many ways.

No mother wishes to be so far separated from her children, especially in increasingly turbulent times. Below is a photo of Sophie with Karl and Beatrice.



Sophie with Karl (estimated to be 4 year old) and Beatrice (estimated to be 2 years old)

Germany was in a period of great change during the 1930's. The National Socialist German

¹¹ Moller, Sophie to Moller, Mathilde. 1 September 1933, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

¹² Moller, Sophie to Moller, Mathilde. 1 September 1933, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

Worker's Party (NSDAP), recovering from political defeat in the elections of 1928, was refocusing on the rural and middle class areas of Germany.¹³ Life was very difficult for German citizens living in the midst of economic and political instability particularly in small towns and villages. "High costs, low yields and prices, taxes and indebtedness created extreme hardships for the small farmer and led to increasing numbers of failures and foreclosures, and economic repercussions were felt in small towns,¹⁴" The Nazi party appealed to these suffering small towns, where they presented themselves as advocates of the German tradition, not revolutionaries. They claimed to be the rejuvenators of the middle class, quickly downplaying their previous Socialist rhetoric.¹⁵ Mathilde and Hermann Payer lived in such a small town: Neuenstadt which would be the new home for Karl and Beatrice. In the 1900's Neuenstadt was a typical small German town with about 1,200 inhabitants.¹⁶ Its economic activity centered around agriculture, handicrafts and small trade while the city was also responsible for public administration for its surrounding villages and towns. Neuenstadt enjoyed a period of prosperity as the town became connected to the railroad, becoming a hub of travel. Once World War I began in 1914, the town slipped into decline as poverty and unemployment became widespread and the administration lost its influence over the surrounding towns.¹⁷ Karl and Beatrice arrived in Neuenstadt at the cusp of this period, when the town was struggling and slowly recovering economically, and politically, in ways that were favorable to the NSDAP's

¹³ Bendersky, Joseph. *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, Lanham (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2007) 60-62

¹⁴ Bendersky, Joseph. *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, Lanham (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2007) 60-62

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

¹⁷ Ibid.

promise of a better life, political strength, employment and national pride.



The street in Neuenstadt where Karl and Beatrice lived with Hermann and Mathilde Payer.

BRINK OF WARTIME (1933- 1940)

Chapter 3: An Unsettled Life: Childhood and War

Karl was immediately enrolled in a primary Latin school in Neuenstadt in 1933, while Beatrice began primary school in April of 1934.¹⁸ Karl would have been the age to enter secondary school during the 1935-1936 school year. Sophie announced her plans to return to Germany to her mother in a letter dated February 23, 1935. Sophie then arrived later that year to see her children and continue her treatment for tuberculosis.¹⁹ At age nine, Karl's childhood took an alarming turn when he was hit by a car in Neuenstadt on October 10, 1935. As a result, he suffered a triple pelvic fracture. His injuries required him to recover for five months, and by March he was relatively recuperated. During February and March of 1936, George was in Germany, visiting the city of Bad Kissingen with his brother and his brother's wife, most likely to attend the property in Sophie's name in Neuenstadt.²⁰ George wanted to build a home there, but these plans never materialized as the relationship between George and Sophie began to dissolve.²¹ This relationship strain can be seen through their correspondence as Sophie remained in a sanitarium in Chalottenhöhe/ Schömberg.

George wrote a letter to Sophie on July 23, 1937 describing his frustrations with the 'situation' in Neuenstadt. He was particularly concerned about tension resulting from

¹⁸ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

¹⁹ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

²⁰ Mahler, Philip to Whom it May Concern. 22 September 1937, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

²¹ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

financing the children's stay with the Payer family.²² He wanted to collect the children from Hermann as soon as he found another place for them to live. However, the most troubling aspect of the letter was his expressing that he no longer wished to stay with Sophie, and that Sophie should remain in Germany if she recovered. Sophie died July 26, 1937, most likely never reading the letter. It is extremely unlikely that Sophie even received the letter, given the amount of time required for post and the fact Sophie was in her last days when the letter was mailed. Below is the report of Sophie's death from the American Foreign Service:²³

²² Ibid.

²³ Report of the Death of an American Citizen: Sophie Moller, American Foreign Service. 17 September 1937, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

(Form No. 192—AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE)

(Corrected October, 1930)

Consult Sections 386 and 411 and Notes of the Consular Regulations

REPORT OF THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE

Stuttgart, Germany, September 17, 1937.
[Place and date]

Name in full: Sophie MOLLER Age: 42 years, 6 months,
Native or naturalized: Naturalized on October 1, 1921 through marriage.
Date of death: July 26 9.45 p.m. 1937.
Place of death: Heilste CharlottehHe, Post Calmbach, Bnz, Württemberg,
Cause of death: Hemorrhage of the lungs caused by tuberculosis, as shown
by certificate of attending physician.
Disposition of the remains: Interred in the Städtischer Friedhof, Neuenstadt a.K.,
Württemberg. Grave of the Hochstetter family.
Local law as to disinterring remains: May be disinterred with permission of local
authorities.
Disposition of the effects: In custody of Mr. Hermann Payer, Neuenstadt a.K.,
Württemberg, Germany. (c/o Firma C. F. Hochstetter).

Person or official responsible for custody of effects and accounting therefor: Mr. Hermann Payer.

Accompanied by relatives or friends as follows:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP

Address of relatives (so far as known):

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP
1. George H. Moller	30 George Street, Tenafly, N.J.,	husband.
Hermann Payer	Neuenstadt a.K., Württemberg,	brother.
2. Carl Henry Moller	Neuenstadt, a.K., Germany,	minor son.
Beatrice Matilda Moller	Neuenstadt, a.K., Germany,	minor daughter.

Notification sent to:
Hermann Payer by telephone on July 27, 1937
George H. Moller by cable on July 27, 1937.

This information and data concerning an inventory of the effects, accounts, etc., have been placed under File 330 in the correspondence of this office.

The widow's attention has been called to the Act of September 22, 1922. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Remarks: Passport No. 182935 issued on April 26, 1935, at Washington.
Renewed at American Consulate, Stuttgart, Germany, on May 18, 1937, to
be valid until April 26, 1939. Canceled and sent to Mr. Hermann
Payer, Neuenstadt a.K., Württemberg, Germany.

Samuel W. Honaker,
Consul General of the United States of America.

[SEAL]

No fee prescribed.

(To be sent in duplicate to the Department of State. To be forwarded in triplicate when decedent is a pensioner, Veterans Bureau beneficiary, or an American citizen-seaman)

JCS/KSB.

Things moved quickly for the children as they took a trip to a vacation home in the Black Forest to mourn the loss of their mother. Karl was 11 years old and Beatrice was 9. Mourning their mother's death and adjusting to an increasingly absent father, Karl and Beatrice continued life in Neuenstadt with Beatrice in primary school and Karl just finishing primary school.

It is likely that Karl and Beatrice did not fully understand the social and political landscape in which they were being raised. From interviews with Hermann's son, Christian, who grew up with Karl, it is known that Hermann took great pains to deflect any HJ recruiting efforts coming Karl's way through emphasizing his status as an American citizen. During the 1920's and 1930's Germany's youth had become increasingly disenchanted by the economic uncertainty of the times. "Many if not most youth cohort for this period felt cheated out of whatever chances they had thought were theirs and increasingly looked for radical alternatives."²⁴ The time was ripe for a new source, a new power to lead this generation of dissatisfied youth. The growing Nazi party recognized that youth were an integral part of the expansion and continuation of their planned millennium.²⁵ "Goebbels, whose intelligent insights into policy matters were second to none in Hitler's entourage stated precisely: 'True leaders are born. Leadership cadres, however, may be trained. To engage in politics one must be called, yet to function administratively it suffices to be instructed, drilled, trained and bred.'²⁶ By 1933, the youth cohort the Nazi regime was most interested in influencing and recruiting were those born after 1915. In Michael Kater's words, the "Nazi Regime Youth Cohort" was not a generation in the classic sense,

²⁴ Kater, Michael. *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge, U.S.A: Harvard University Press, 2004) pgs 6-23

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

but a group that shared a major experience within a relatively short time span, with the youngest members born in 1934 and the oldest members born in 1916.²⁷ Karl's age and physical characteristics- tall, blonde and blue eyed made him an ideal recruit for the growing organization.

When Hitler became the Chancellor of the German Reich on January 30, 1933, he appointed Baldur von Schriach the chief of all youth activities in the NSDAP, who attempted to consolidate all of Germany's youth into the Hitlerjugend.²⁸ Through adsorbing youth clubs and religious groups, and the establishment of Hilter as Chancellor, the HJ grew exceptionally. As the presence of the Hitlerjugend became more pervasive in German villages through the mid-1930's, the majority of boys Karl's age had joined the group. The Hitlerjugend grew from 100,000 in January 1933 to 2 million by the end of the year and 5.4 million by December 1936.²⁹ There was immense social pressure for families to allow and encourage their children to participate in the Hitlerjugend. However, Hilter Youth leadership estimated that there were almost 3.5 million youth outside of their influence, to which they responded with a decree in February 1933 forbidding youth leagues to exist or meet.³⁰ Beginning in September 1939, Nazi leadership passed a statutory provision calling for compulsory membership of boys and girl ages ten to eighteen. A year before the compulsory mandate was passed, Karl transferred out of his school in Neuenstadt to a boarding school in Kirchberg on January 8, 1938. At the time, Neuenstadt had become a central hub of Nazi activity and programming, and perhaps Hermann wished to remove Karl from an increasingly tense and dangerous environment as a young German-American

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

man.³¹ While Karl was in boarding school, Hermann married Frida Klimbach, (a family friend and soon-to-be the mother Karl and Beatrice were not able to have throughout childhood.)

As Karl made his home in Kirchberg, Beatrice was still attending school in Neuenstadt. Beginning in October 1938 she became increasingly ill, and was diagnosed with asthenia by a doctor in Helibronn. Asthenia is a medical term for 'lack or loss of strength or energy; weakness.'³² Her overall weakness continued through the year.³³

Tensions along racial and ethnic lines increased within the Third Reich in the late 1930's. On November 9, 1938, a wave of orchestrated violence toward Jews swept across Germany, an event remembered as the "Night of Broken Glass," or *Reichkristallnacht*. "Synagogues were burned, Jewish shops were destroyed and Jews were beaten and arrested all over Germany."³⁴ Neuenstadt did not see much of the coordinated and relatively anonymous violence and damage, mostly due to the fact that very few Jewish families lived in Neuenstadt. *Reichkristallnacht* was much more devastating in larger cities where Jewish areas and shops were easily identifiable.³⁵

The year of 1939 brought increasing turmoil to everyday German life. On September 1, 1939 German troops invaded Poland, spurring European countries to action and igniting World War II. On that same day, the American Consulate sent out the first of several letters

³¹ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

³² "Asthenia," Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, accessed 5 April 2013

³³ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

³⁴ Breitman, Richard, Goda, Norman, Naftali, Timothy and Wolfe, Robert. "Banking on Hitler: Chase National Bank and the Ruckwanderer Scheme," *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pgs 173-193

³⁵ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

that warned American citizens of increasing hostilities in Europe and strongly advised leaving Germany:³⁶

“As the political situation in Europe has become seriously acute and as hostilities might possibly break out at any moment, American citizens are strongly urged to once more leave Germany without delay and proceed to a neutral country. Switzerland would seem to offer as great a possibility of safety and convenience as any other European country.”

The letter recommended citizens work through the German or American consulates in Switzerland, “who no doubt will be able to help you.”³⁷ The letter also advised citizens remaining in the country to immediately register their current address and an emergency contact person in the United States. Upon receiving this letter, Hermann registered Karl and Beatrice with the Swiss Consulate. The American Consul General, S.W. Honaker, sent three additional letters dated September 13, 1939, November 28, 1939 and August 25, 1939. The September 13th letter was written to make American citizens in Germany aware of the September 6th decree by the German government requiring:³⁸

“...all aliens including American citizens, who intend to stay in Germany more than 48 hours to apply to the Police for a residence permit...”

The August 25th letter included the recommendation from the American Consulate in Berlin for American citizens to leave without delay. The letter also indicates that the areas surrounding Neuenstadt were dangerous:³⁹

³⁶ Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. “Fourth Letter” 1 Sept. 1939, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. 13 Sept. 1939, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

³⁹ Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. “Second Letter” 25 August 1939, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

"It appears from an unusually large volume of requests for advice that many American citizens residing in Wüttemberg and Baden regard the present political situation as very grave."

The third letter Karl and Beatrice received from the American Consul General was a response to a letter sent by the family asking for advice given their current situation in which their father was unwilling to have them home as of yet, and Beatrice's fragile state:⁴⁰

"The Consulate has received your letter regarding the impracticability of your returning to the United States at the present time and makes the following suggestions without assuming responsibility whatsoever."

The letter goes on to suggest refuge in Switzerland and goes into detail about the financial challenges of wartime, particularly with currency exchanges between the U.S. and Germany:⁴¹

"German foreign exchange regulations continue to limit the amount of German money which may be taken out of this country to 10 Reichmarks in cash. Consequently, you should take steps to provide yourself with adequate foreign funds to cover all possible expenses..."

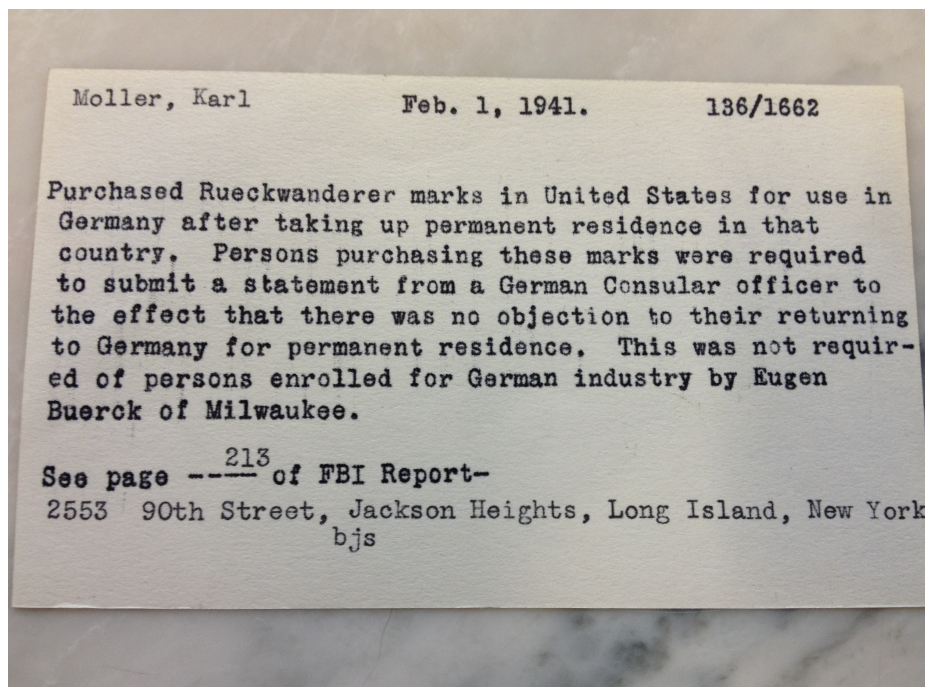
This stream of letters from the consulate, along with the beginning of wartime brought increasing uncertainty to the Payer family, Karl and Beatrice. In particular, finances became an area of tension between George Moller and the Payer family. Money transfers between the United States and Germany became nearly impossible.

In further investigating Karl and Beatrice's case in State Department documents at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, an index card surfaced that raises additional questions about Karl's activities in Germany. Karl's unique position in Germany may have left him as a person of interest and investigation by the American government.

⁴⁰ Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. "Third Letter" (undated) *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

⁴¹ Ibid.

Despite being an American citizen, Karl grew up with a German upbringing, which could have caused some to question Karl's loyalties to the United States.⁴²



The index card refers to 'Rueckwanderer' marks, which were part of a currency scheme created to incentivize the return of Germans living abroad through a highly favorable exchange rate.⁴³ Ordinarily, Germans returning home from the U.S. would receive 2.48 RM per dollar, compared to 4.10 RM to the dollar in 1920.⁴⁴ The Rueckwanderer scheme allowed "returnees to Germany to exchange 50 percent of their dollars at a rate of 4.10 RM

⁴² Index Card: Moller, Karl dated February 1, 1941. Decimal File Name Index: Molin (General)-Mollow, William B. Region 59, Box No. PI-157 E-200 HM 1992 843. National Archives Building College Park, College Park, MD.

⁴³ Breitman, Richard, Goda, Norman, Naftali, Timothy and Wolfe, Robert. "Banking on Hitler: Chase National Bank and the Ruckwanderer Scheme," *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pgs 173-193

⁴⁴ Ibid.

per dollar.⁴⁵ In July 1936, this rate was improved so that 100 percent of devalued U.S. currency could be exchanged at a rate of RM 4.018 per dollar. The scheme was only relatively successful: “Despite high hopes, money trickled in slowly,” mostly due to the fact “few Germans wished to return to a continent menaced by the darkening clouds of war.”⁴⁶ Nazi Germany benefitted by twenty-one million dollars from the scheme (about RM 52 million), a relatively small amount.

This program ran undetected by the U.S. government until October 1940, four years after the program had begun. Through tracking bank records and donations, the FBI was able to uncover the scheme and begin to investigate Germans in the U.S. who purchased the Marks. New York Special Agent-in Charge B.E. Sackett remarked that filling out a Rueckwanderer mark application as a German-American “is tantamount to an oath of allegiance to the German government.”⁴⁷ The ensuing FBI investigation resulted in a list of 7,300 names of individuals by May 1941. FBI case files were opened on every name on the list and these cases were referred to local police for “appropriate investigative attention.”⁴⁸ By February 1944, the FBI jailed 441 German aliens. Thirty-five naturalized citizens of German origin also lost their citizenship as a result of participating in the program.⁴⁹ From information available at present, there is no way to confirm whether the index card found pertains to the Karl Henry Moller of this narrative. The files associated with this index card were destroyed in a purge of State Department documents in the 1960’s. In 1941 Karl was

⁴⁵ Breitman, Richard, Goda, Norman, Naftali, Timothy and Wolfe, Robert. “Banking on Hitler: Chase National Bank and the Ruckwanderer Scheme,” *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pgs 173-193

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

15 and an unlikely purchaser of Rueckwanderer marks since they were specifically for Germans living in America. It is possible that his father, George filed for Rueckwanderer marks under Karl's name since he was a minor. Whomever the Karl Moller referred to on this card is, he was the subject of the described FBI investigations that proved to be detrimental to many German Americans who participated in the program.

WARTIME (1941- 1945)

Chapter 4 Critical Mass:

In March and April of 1940, Beatrice repeatedly visited doctors in Neuenstadt.⁵⁰ On April 19, 1940, she was admitted into a children's hospital in Tuebingen, where she was diagnosed with open tuberculosis.⁵¹ Her doctor recommended that she enter a sanitarium in Scheidegg/Alläu, a region 170 miles from Neuenstadt. The tragedy of Beatrice's tuberculosis was felt throughout the family as she entered the most perilous years of her life. Tuberculosis in Germany and other European countries during that time carried a negative stigma. Tuberculosis was associated with people considered "dirty and irresponsible, such as immigrants, itinerant workers, prostitutes and the 'work-shy'.⁵²" While medicine was on the verge of antibiotic breakthrough, tuberculosis patients were labeled as 'asocial,' a state in which individuals were "selfish and indifferent to communal welfare," due to their ability to infect healthy populations.⁵³ This stigma reflected the Nazi ideology of 'social hygiene' and 'racial hygiene'. Those who supported racial hygiene believed that "rational management of the German population, by controlling the reproductive groups within it, would lead to the attainment of a healthier and more productive nation.⁵⁴" Warning of 'racial TB,' Nazi medical officials created legislation that mandated that asocial and anti-social open tuberculosis patients were to be prevented

⁵⁰ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Harsch, Donna. "Medicalized Social Hygiene? Tuberculosis Policy in the German Democratic Republic," *Bulletin of Historical Medicine* (2012) 86: 394-423 accessed March 5, 2013

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Pine, Lisa *Nazi Family Policy 1933-1945* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1997) pg 11

from producing “genetically defective offspring” and were sterilized.⁵⁵ These were the realities facing Beatrice when she was diagnosed. Beatrice travelled to the sanitarium in Scheidigg and remained there through the year. In March 23, 1941, Beatrice returned to Neuenstadt and consulted a lung specialist in Helibronn. The severity of her case appeared to subside at this point and Beatrice returned to school that same month.⁵⁶

In late 1940 and early 1941, the Payer family received multiple letters from George Moller announcing that he had remarried to a woman named Rosa Sthele in the United States. According to a letter dated November 26, 1940, Rosa immigrated to the United States from Germany and worked as a nurse.⁵⁷ This letter was soon followed by another letter in January 1941 stating that it was impossible to transfer money from the United States to Germany and that George could no longer send money for Karl and Beatrice’s education.⁵⁸

This news was troubling as expenses from Karl’s boarding school and Beatrice’s illness began to add up. Karl remained at boarding school in Kirchberg until July 1943. The majority of the 7th grade class had enrolled in the *Wehrmacht*- the German military. The school could not support a class of such reduced size, and enrolled students had to transfer to continue their education.⁵⁹ As a result, Karl transferred to the Mergenthaler High School in Schwaebisch Hall. There Karl lived with Emma Wittlinger, who rented rooms to students. During Karl’s time at Schwabisch Hall, he met his first long-term girlfriend, Pia Nagele.

⁵⁵ Harsch, Donna. “Medicalized Social Hygiene? Tuberculosis Policy in the German Democratic Republic,” *Bulletin of Historical Medicine* (2012) 86: 394-423 accessed March 5, 2013

⁵⁶ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

The Allied forces began bombing German towns and villages from 1942 onward with regularity. These attacks resulted in the destruction of railroads and post offices, which reduced post services to an intermittent trickle.⁶⁰ In addition, letters often went missing or could not be written in the first place due to a lack of writing supplies.⁶¹ The absence of letters found between the period of 1943-1944, is a strong indicator that the destruction of World War II had significantly crippled communication systems throughout Germany. During 1943 and 1944, the Payer family left behind school report cards and records of doctor's visits for Beatrice. In January of 1944, Beatrice once again consulted a doctor in Helibronn and was diagnosed with diphtheria, a disease that made a resurgence during the war- particularly in children and young people.⁶²

One letter arrived from Karl soon after Beatrice was diagnosed with diphtheria, informing Hermann that he had to request to continue schooling in Schwaebisch Hall through the NSDAP agency *Hauptamt Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi). The VoMi was responsible for managing the interests of ethnic Germans who lived outside of the country.⁶³ This organization was also responsible for the resettlement of Germans outside of Germany into newly occupied territories. Shortly after this letter was received, two 'Writ of Protection' documents arrived from the Swiss Consulate for Karl and Beatrice. These official papers confirmed their identity for the State Department.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Vaizey, Hester. *Surviving Hitler's War* (New York: Pallgrave Macmillan, 2010) pg 39

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Bourdelais, Patrice. *Epidemics Laid Low: A History of What Happened in Rich Countries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) pg.130

⁶³ Loumans, Valdis. *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993

⁶⁴ See page 66: Schutzpass: Beatrice Moller and Karl Moller, Swiss Consulate. Issued 8 January 1945, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript)

However, these documents could not protect Karl and Beatrice from the increasing difficulties and prejudices of war. In September 1944, Karl was forced to terminate his schooling at Schawbisch Hall due to the increasingly disruptive presence of the war. In addition, Karl was unable to receive his A-level school report due to his inability to serve in the *Wehrmacht*⁶⁵. Hermann petitioned the *Reichserziehungministerium* (REM, or the Reich Ministry of Education) for Karl to receive his certificate. Awaiting his A-levels, which are examinations taken in order to be admitted into university, Karl moved back to Neuenstadt and assisted Hermann with daily errands and property maintenance.

The realities of war also affected Beatrice, whose medical treatment was disrupted. From April to October 1944, Beatrice continued to visit doctors to monitor her treatment for diphtheria and tuberculosis in Heilbronn.

On December 4, 1944, an Allied bombing raid devastated Heilbronn. Approximately 5,800 bombs were dropped upon the city, and within the span of thirty minutes 6,500 people were killed, including Frida Payer's father, step-mother, step-sister and niece. More than fifty percent of the city was destroyed.⁶⁶ According to Christian, Karl assisted the city in its search for injured people in the aftermath of the bombing.⁶⁷

During this time, the world of medicine was on the verge of discovering the power of antibiotics. In 1929, Alexander Fleming made the observation that no staph bacteria grew near a mold called *Penicillium notatum*.⁶⁸ This led to the investigation of other antibiotics

⁶⁵ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁶⁶ Fischer, Klaus. *Nazi Germany: A New History* (New York: Continuum, 1995)

⁶⁷ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

⁶⁸ Bourdelais, Patrice. *Epidemics Laid Low: A History of What Happened in Rich Countries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) pg.130

derived from fungi and partial chemical synthesis.⁶⁹ From this research emerged streptomycin, which was first isolated on October 19, 1943. This would eventually become the first antibiotic treatment for tuberculosis when its curative properties were announced at the annual meeting of the U.S. National Tuberculosis Association in 1946.⁷⁰ These findings did not offer any improvement for Beatrice. Supplies of streptomycin were limited, and the drug was slow to reach Europe.⁷¹ Hermann applied for medicine in Switzerland during this time, but was unable to pay for it. As Beatrice's situation became increasingly dire, George offered to pay for Beatrice to return to the United States. Beatrice proved to be too sick for the trip and in February 1945 she moved to a tuberculosis hospital in the Alläu mountains.⁷²



Buildings completely leveled by the December 4, 1944 Allied bombing raid of Helibronn.

⁶⁹ Bourdelais, Patrice. *Epidemics Laid Low: A History of What Happened in Rich Countries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) pg.130

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Thomas, Daniel M. "The History of Tuberculosis," *Respiratory Medicine* (2006) 100:1862-1870 accessed March 5, 2013

⁷² Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

POSTWAR (1945- 1946)

Chapter 5: Post War life, Re-connecting with America

World War II came to a close April 8, 1945, leaving behind a destroyed Germany and a scattered political system. Life for Germans became increasingly difficult as food and supplies became scarce and the German currency became steeply devalued. The war had separated Beatrice and Karl as they struggled with their own unique circumstances. Karl, now 19, began to re-connect with members of the family in the United States while in Germany. Beatrice on the other hand, faced the scarcity and impoverishment of Reconstruction through various hospitals as her tuberculosis advanced. Her illness prevented her from escaping war-torn medical facilities and subjected her to further stigmatization. The following subsections focus first on Karl and then Beatrice. The events described in each section occurred simultaneously between 1945-1946.

Re-connecting with America: Karl

After months of waiting, Karl received his A-levels for his time at Schwaebisch Hall in October of 1945. He then moved to Stuttgart, the closest city to Neuenstadt to live with Hermann and Sophie's brother, Adolf and his wife, Eugenie. In Stuttgart he began attending architecture lectures at the technical university.⁷³ Karl also began to re-connect with the U.S. State Department concerning his citizenship. A State Department letter to Karl dated April 19, 1946 confirmed his citizenship and outlined directions to apply for a renewed American passport:

"Your claim to American Citizenship has been examined, and on the basis of the information you have furnished, it appears your claim is valid."⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Painter, Carvel to Moller, Karl. 19 April 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

The letter instructed Karl to provide four photos of himself, a witness to vouch for his identity, and signed statement of the following:⁷⁵

“I, Karl Henry Moller, depose and state that Karl Henry Moller has never entered nor served in the armed forces of the German State, and has never acquired the nationality of the German state by so doing and has neither accepted nor performed the duties of any office, post, or employment under this Government or the German State of political subdivision thereof, for which only nationals of the German State were eligible,”

With this paperwork settled, Karl departed Germany for America in May, with no notice to any family members, including Hermann or Beatrice. At this time, it is still not known what port Karl departed from and when exactly he did so. It can be stipulated that Karl's correspondence with the State Department and American Consulate was in preparation for his trip to America. At this time there are no Ellis Island documents to be found concerning Karl during this period, which suggests he entered the U.S. on a government ship. Whatever Karl's reason for leaving for the U.S. at that time, it was against Hermann's advice. According to an interview with Christian Payer, Hermann's advice to Karl and George was to not abruptly return the children to the United States. Instead, Hermann wished that George would come to Germany to retrieve Karl and Beatrice and bring them home.⁷⁶

Concerned, Hermann and the rest of the Payer family awaited word from Karl. The Payer family did not hear from Karl for a month: Karl's first letter to Germany was dated June 4, 1946. Karl's letter was optimistic about his new life in America. He enrolled in a six-week English course over the summer and was planning on enrolling in Stevens Technical

⁷⁵ Painter, Carvel to Moller, Karl. 19 April 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

⁷⁶ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

Institute to become a civil engineer. Karl also inquired after Beatrice, hopeful for her return:⁷⁷

"I very much enjoy being here. We have a small but nice house, a large garden and chickens... How is Beate? Has she already obtained her passport? Father thinks she should come over to U.S. in autumn. Unfortunately, he is unable to travel to Germany himself. It is as difficult for us to get to you as for you to come here," (June 5, 1976 Karl to Hermann).

Karl was also concerned that he would have to join the United States Army. During 1946, the 1940 Selective Training and Service Act was still active. The act, which was signed into law by Franklin Roosevelt, required all men between ages 21 and 35 to register with local draft boards. During WWII, all men 18 to 45 were subject to conscription and all men ages 18 to 65 were required to register.⁷⁸ Two months after arriving in the United States, September 17, 1946, Karl joined the U.S. Army, serving as a supply clerk in Italy⁷⁹.

It is clear, however, that the circumstances of Karl's enlistment and departure from his father's home are more complicated than it appears. For reasons that remain unclear, George and Karl had a disagreement sometime before mid- September of 1946. Karl was kicked out of the house and George wrote a scathing letter to Herman just one day after Karl's official enlistment, September 18, 1946. In the letter, George described Karl's stay as peaceful for the first five weeks. However, as time passed he found Karl to be withdrawn and disrespectful, and indicated that he would like Karl to stay away:

⁷⁷ Moller, Karl to Payer, Hermann. 5 June 1976, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

⁷⁸ "History and Records" *Selective Service System*, Accessed 4 April 2013
<http://www.sss.gov/induct.htm>

⁷⁹ Separation Qualification Record: Karl Henry Moller, Army of the United States. Undated, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

"I would give nothing for it if I never see him [Karl] again. We [George and Rosa] are glad that he is no longer in our home... He is in the Army now."⁸⁰

Hermann quickly responded to this troubling letter. He alluded to the very sudden adjustment to American life for Karl, and that there were bound to be difficulties in a father and son becoming reacquainted after such a long time apart.⁸¹ Hermann defended Karl in that he had a difficult adolescence in Germany and assured George that Karl had a good education, manners and was of good character.⁸² Hermann also wrote Karl for more details on the conflict with the advice to make amends with George particularly for Beatrice's sake since she so wanted for the family to be reunited.⁸³

A Turn for the Worse: Beatrice

Beatrice continued her stay in a sanitarium in the Alläu mountains, where the increasing scarcities of food, medicine and proper doctors continued. The incidence of tuberculosis rapidly increased and became an area of national concern in Germany: "After 1946, TB moved to the front line of concern because of the post war conditions that allowed the disease to spread quickly: overcrowded housing, poor nutrition, poor caloric intake and an epidemic of typhus."⁸⁴ Given these conditions, the limited resources that were available were funneled into existing sanitariums that were well-organized to ensure that resources were allocated efficiently.⁸⁵ As previously mentioned, the medical advances that were taking place during 1946 and onwards with streptomycin did not make their way to

⁸⁰ Payer, Hermann to American Consulate, Stuttgart. 10 November 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

⁸¹ Payer, Christian. Telephone Interview. 8 March 2013.

⁸² Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁸³ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal*

⁸⁴ Harsch, Donna. "Medicalized Social Hygiene? Tuberculosis Policy in the German Democratic Republic," *Bulletin of Historical Medicine* (2012) 86: 394-423 accessed March 5, 2013

⁸⁵ Ibid.

German TB patients: “Not only shortages in new (potentially outpatient) medicines but also early uncertainties about their efficacy reinforced the role of the sanitarium and the influence of their medical directors.⁸⁶” The unavailability of new medicines to post-war Germany made more invasive treatments the norm, particularly for Beatrice. On November 15, 1945, Hermann wrote George for permission to schedule Beatrice for a thoracoplasty through the Red Cross (the removal of six ribs to collapse the infected area of lung)⁸⁷. On January 1, 1946, Beatrice had the first of two surgeries for the procedure at a tuberculosis hospital in Heidelberg/Rohrbach. The second procedure took place a month later, and she remained there through March. From there, Beatrice travelled to a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) hospital in Bietigheim. According to letters written by Hermann on Beatrice’s behalf, Beatrice’s stay at the UNRRA hospital was distressing. The following letter is a personal request that Beatrice be given additional food supplies in the wake of the strange circumstances the family was in. Additionally, the letter references that other girls in the UNRRA hospital had been unkind to Beatrice, and Hermann addressed his wish to remove Beatrice from the hospital and inability to do so at the present time:

“Will you kindly allow me to beg you for help. Beatrice cannot stay any longer in Bietigheim amongst people who dislike her. The best thing would be to send her to America. But I must fear that in the house of her father things are not so that Beatrice would feel well. I have no exact knowledge about things over there...”⁸⁸”

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁸⁸ Payer, Hermann to Mrs. Major Fleming. 29 September 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

September 29th 1946.

Mrs. Major Flemming,
Team 910,
BIETIGHEIM.

Mylady !

My nice, Beatrix Moller (Unra Hospital Bietigheim) ,
was phoning me yesterday , that the Doctor of the hospital
had ordered her to leave the hospital as soon as possible.
Besides this , Beatrix complained her beeing ill treated
by some of the other girls of the hospital.

Would you kindly allow me , to beg you for help. Beatrix
cannot stay any longer in Bietigheim amongst people, who
dislike her. The best thing would be to send her to Amer-
ica. But J must fear, that in the house of her father things
are not so , that Beatrix will feel well. J have no exact
knowledges about things over there. But it is a strange thing,
that neitner Beatrix nor myself have got ever since any lett-
ers from her father , except one or two. Her father is writ-
ing: Beatrix should stay with the Unra as long as possible.
The brother of Beatrix has departed for America in may & is
now in his fathers home. He does not write also. J must fear
he does not feel well. Perhaps it is the second moth-
er of Beatrix & Charles or perhaps it is lack of money. J
don't know.

After all , J cannot let her go. Besides the above mention-
ed strange things Beatrix cannot forbear the summer-heat of
NewYork . J think it necessary, Beatrix is gonig to learn
somethng (J am proposing household, nursery , flrist or some
thing like these) here in Germany & first of all, she must
learn english. After having knowledges enough, to make her
life herself she might depart for America. J am ready to pay
for all this. The only difficulty is , J cannot give her enough
to eat . Could not it be made possible, that Beatrix will get
foodstuff-supports from the Unra or so ? That is the only
thing J am begging from you instantly. All other things J will
manage myself at your own perfect satisfaction.

Please let me know your decision .

Yours most respectfully

H. Payer

Hermann also expressed that Beatrice should have the opportunity to learn a trade such as nursing as well as the English language if she were to eventually return to America.⁸⁹ Hermann wrote another letter a month later to the American Consulate in distress about the pressure to move Beatrice out of the UNRRA hospital and the brewing conflict in America between Karl and George. Hermann felt that George and his wife, Rosa, would not provide a home in which Beatrice would be comfortable:

⁸⁹ Ibid.

“It is impossible for me to allow that Beatrice depart for such a home. I think it is the best thing that Beatrice learn a job here in Germany or America if she likes it afterwards. I will pay for all of this, but I cannot supply enough foodstuffs for her.”⁹⁰

Again, the deprivation of food was particularly severe for those in tuberculosis sanitariums. During the first months of 1947, Hermann travelled to the hospital in Bietigheim to visit Beatrice and arrange for her to receive better medication and food rations. His efforts were in vain, and on February 26, 1947, Hermann wrote to George describing Beatrice’s poor condition due to lack of medical supplies and adequate food.⁹¹ In March of 1947, Beatrice was finally able to transfer hospitals, moving to the district hospital in Luwigsburg.⁹²

⁹⁰ Payer, Hermann to American Consulate, Stuttgart. 10 November 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

⁹¹ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

⁹² Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

RECONSTRUCTION AND AMERICA (1947-1949)

Chapter 6: Karl's 'New World' and Beatrice's Tragedy

The period of 1947- 1949 was an incredibly trying time for the Payer family in Germany, Karl serving in the Army, and Beatrice growing increasingly ill.

Military Service and Residual Conflict with George

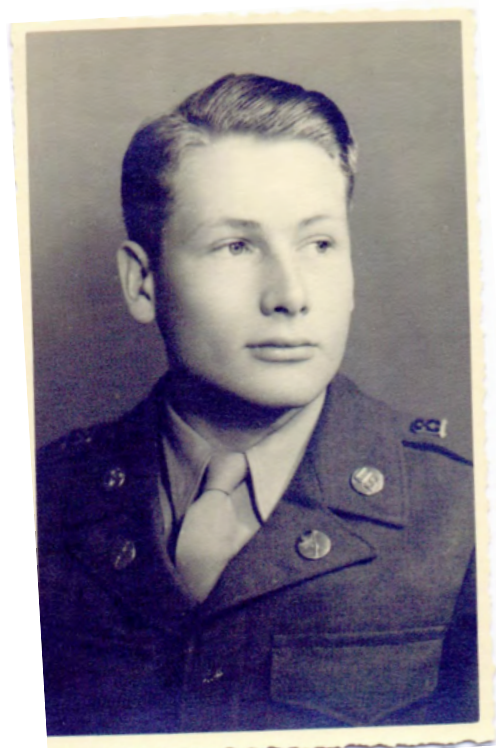
According to letters from both George and Karl, Karl's military service appeared to quell the conflict between the two men. In a letter from George to Hermann dated November 4, 1946, George alludes to how the military had changed Karl, and that while in basic training he came home regularly.⁹³ Karl echoed this sentiment to Hermann once he was deployed overseas to Trieste, Italy, a town on the northeastern boarder next to present-day Slovenia. Karl worked as a clerk while stationed there for eleven months. Karl was honorably discharged from the Army, arriving back in the United States November 25, 1947.⁹⁴

Despite a happy homecoming, the relationship between George and Karl began to quickly dissolve. During this point in time, postal service between George to Hermann and George to Beatrice became very unreliable. Multiple letters between 1947 and 1948 complained of lack of responses or 'thank-yous' for parcels that sent valuable supplies. In a letter from Karl to Hermann, Karl remarked on the lasting conflict between George and the Payer family concerning repayment of the cost of raising Beatrice and himself. Karl offered

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Separation Qualification Record: Karl Henry Moller, Army of the United States. Undated, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

to repay this outstanding debt, which Hermann refused.⁹⁵ From the period of 1948 on, mention of the debt owed by the Moller family to the Payer family became much more frequent. This could be for a couple reasons: First of all, Beatrice's medical treatments and surgeries became an increasing burden. With supplies and doctors so scarce, even the most basic supplies came at a high cost. Additionally, both children had reached very near adulthood, and were of typical age of financial independence. Finally, Germany began instituting a currency reform in 1947-1948 that had devastating effects on the population, challenging even the most financially well-off.



A photo of Karl during his military service spanning 1946- 1947. He is twenty-one or twenty-two in this photo.

⁹⁵ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

Currency Reform

In late 1947 and 1948, Germany's economy was struggling in every way. As a result of war damage, German manufacturing production was "less than 60 percent of its 1936 level and real per capita consumption was about two thirds of what it had been then."⁹⁶ Even the most basic goods were scarce. Additionally, the Third Reich's financing of the war left public debt at almost 400 percent of the 1939 gross national product, resulting in excess liquidity.⁹⁷ The *Reichsmark* (RM) had virtually lost all of its value and Germans began turning to barter trade for everyday items. Black markets flourished and undermined the price and wage controls. Exporting was unprofitable and imported goods quickly disappeared from regular markets.⁹⁸

Clearly, a comprehensive reform was needed. Germany's currency reform involved the substantial reduction of monetary assets in the private sector, resulting in a "partial or complete default by the public sector."⁹⁹ The reform set an exchange rate between RM and Deutsche Mark (DM) of 10 RM for 1 DM. The implementation of this exchange rate also influenced the value of monetary assets and liabilities so that "debts in DM terms was reduced to one tenth of their level in RMs."¹⁰⁰ In order to address this potential wealth redistribution, a system of taxes and transfer payments were enacted along with the

⁹⁶ Mayer, Thomas and Gunther, Thurman. "Radical Currency Reform: Germany 1948" *Finance & Development* (March 1990) Accessed March 25, 2013

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

broader monetary reform.¹⁰¹ Although the initial effects were devastating for Germans, they set the stage for economic recovery.¹⁰²

Tough Times: George and Karl's Disagreement

The tone of letters to Karl in the United States during 1948 shifted from an informative nature, and tended to offer advice in resolving conflict and loneliness. At present, Karl's letters to the family in Neuenstadt are not available, but it can be deduced from letters to Karl that he had indicated that he was struggling with his life in America.

Helga Payer wrote her cousin, very upset about Karl's present situation:¹⁰³

"I again cannot understand why such a good man like you gets so little pleasure and luck in his life, and perhaps there is no dear person who could help you and to whom you could bare your soul. We must be confident in our lives to overcome all pain and sadness and provide us with an always grateful mirth."

Eugenie Payer, Hermann's sister-in-law, also echoed her disapproval of Karl's situation on August 22, 1948.¹⁰⁴

From our point of view it's impossible to understand your separation. In any case it's absolutely abnormal that your father after so many years of forced separation now willingly lost his temper in such a manner. I think he has grown too old and unable to understand youth,¹⁰⁵"

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Payer, Helga to Moller, Karl. Stuttgart, 8 August 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹⁰⁴ Payer, Eugenie to Moller, Karl. Stuttgart, 22 August 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Helga also went into detail about the state of life in Germany, which was still a struggle. The currency reform created a difficult climate, in which many Germans had turned to fraud and other means of getting by. Eugenie elaborated further in her letter¹⁰⁶:

There is no place in the world where things are fine right now. Three and a half years after the war and we still don't have peace and lack food. Uncle Adolf earns only 1/3 of his former salary. There are no incoming orders for home-work and everything is rubbish. Due to the high railway tariffs people are little disposed to travel and thus there is no demand for accommodations. Over night the stores had plenty of goods, eve fruit and vegetables were offered, but at exorbinent prices so that everybody buys only very reluctantly."

On September 7, 1948, the family matriarch, Mathilde Payer, passed away, leaving behind an inheritance that included Karl. Karl was left a bed that became the subject of many letters back and forth, along with the outstanding debt owed the George to Hermann.

Meanwhile, Beatrice's Decline

While Karl was serving in the U.S. Army, Beatrice's health took a turn for the worse. With the poor state of the German economy and black markets for basic goods, those sick in hospitals suffered. Additionally, the difficulty to mail parcels and letters consistently affected Beatrice's relationship with her father. In a letter dated May 20, 1947, George conveyed his pessimism that Beatrice would be able to return to the United States, and expressed a fear that she would meet the same fate as her mother.¹⁰⁷ It appears that Karl acted as a mediator between his father and Beatrice and Hermann. Shortly after George wrote his letter to Beatrice, he wrote to Karl very frustrated with the situation in Germany. George felt that Beatrice was ungrateful for the parcels he had sent since she never thanked

¹⁰⁶ Payer, Eugenie to Moller, Karl. Stuttgart, 22 August 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

him and only asked for more.¹⁰⁸ The question remains whether this is the truth, or if Beatrice's letters were lost in the unreliable post-war postage system. On June 11, 1947, Beatrice's condition was assessed. Her doctor found her prognosis to be questionable:¹⁰⁹

Ludwigsburg/Wttbg.

11.6.47.

General - Hospital

Medical - certificate

The patient Beatrice M ö l l e r , born Sept. 18th 1928 from Bietigheim was taken in at this hospital station on March 11th 1947. The patient is suffering from a condition after Thorakoplastic on the right side , as well as a melted infiltration near the hilus on the left side , strewing into the surroundings. T.B. bacilli in the expectoration .

The patient is still in a suffering strong condition of nourishment weighing 61,6 Kg., height 1.74 m . Temperature normal to subnormal , little cough , little expectoration . Bacteria in expectoration positive.

Clinical state of lungs : Asymetrical chest by reasons of condition after Thorakoplastic . In front and in back on the right side big operation scars : 3 ribs totally and 2 ribs partially resessed . Border of lung on the left shifts easily in breathing, everywhere a full tap - sound with a few moist Rg's. On the right side the borders are shifting rather less , other wise "o.B." (without finding).

Röntgenologically : Condition after Thorakoplassik on the right side, no proof of a new infection. On the left, near the hilus an infection shadow of the size of a small apple, melting into center and single smaller spot-shadows in the surroundings. Strong cord-drawing to the upper and lower under lobes.

Course : Progressive .

Prognosis : Questionable .

H. Lütken

St. der Inneren Abteil.
Krankenhaus Ludwigsburg

In June, Hermann wrote two increasingly urgent letters to institutions to come to Beatrice's aid. On June 16, 1947, Hermann wrote to the American Consulate:¹¹⁰

"Besides this the father cannot afford to pay for her to go to an American sanitarium. He was not even sending food parcels for her until recently. Beatrice Moller cannot help herself. So I have to help, as I did all these years long. But I cannot [contribute] enough. I cannot give her eggs and butter and meat, etc. And a girl must have plenty of these things.

¹⁰⁸ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ Medical Certificate: Beatrice Moller, Ludwigsburg/Wttbg. 11 June 1947, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

¹¹⁰ Payer, Hermann to American Consulate in Stuttgart, Germany. 16 June 1947, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

“Therefore I am begging you instantly for regular food-supply. Beatrice Moller is now in Ludwisburg Hospital, where the UNRRA has brought her, and she an American girl, has to live from the small German rations!”

Hermann continued in a letter to the Red Cross describing the situation with the hopes that Beatrice’s American citizenship would enable her to receive more resources:¹¹¹

“I am convinced that the American authorities do not wish that an American girl is forced to beg her German relations for even a piece of bread, not to speak of eggs or meat, etc. “

After many attempts to move Beatrice to another hospital, Hermann heard back from Dr. Würz in Krähenbad in June 1947. Dr. Würz wrote that he would be able to admit Beatrice at the end of the week. Beatrice and Hermann travelled to Krähenbad and arrived July 14, 1947. Beatrice remained with Dr. Würz through the year’s end. On January 1, 1948, the doctor wrote Hermann with very bad news: there was no getting better for Beatrice. He recommended that Beatrice be transferred to a hospital closer to Neuenstadt and confided in Hermann that he had yet to tell Beatrice of his findings.¹¹² Soon after, Beatrice moved back to the hospital in Naroud for another surgery and post-surgery treatment on February 16th.

As the summer passed, Beatrice came to realize the severity of her situation. In July, Hermann received a letter from Beatrice in which where she expressed her awareness of her condition, yet wished to return to the U.S. as soon as possible to see Karl and her father.¹¹³ Beatrice and Karl were also corresponding back and forth, particularly about the

¹¹¹ Payer, Hermann to Field Master of American Red Cross. 30 June 1947, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹¹² Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

¹¹³ Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 18 Aug 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

conflict between Karl and his father. Beatrice drew from her experiences living in sanitariums to offer Karl advice:¹¹⁴

For you it was difficult to adapt yourself to their way of life, and for me it shall be more difficult, but I have decided to face my destiny in the highest confidence. During many years I had to live together with different people and it wasn't always easy to get along with them in a peaceful manner, but I tried as much as possible to see their positive sides, which everybody has."

Beatrice's treatment continued, in which the revolutionary antibiotic streptomycin finally was added to her regimen, which went on to describe in her August 18th letter:¹¹⁵

"I think I haven't told you that I am just undergoing an injection therapy with a new American medication called streptomycin. The expectations are high, but nobody knows how successful it will be."

As mentioned earlier in this narrative, streptomycin was the first antibiotic found to be effective against tuberculosis and was openly promoted as a cure at the annual meeting of the U.S. National Tuberculosis Association in 1946.¹¹⁶ The fact that this treatment was available to Beatrice two years after its discovery is a testament to the doubts in the medical community about its efficacy and the scarcity of the most basic medicines in post-war Europe.¹¹⁷ Despite this treatment, Beatrice described a grim future for the first time in writing:¹¹⁸

"Since only three injections could be given, the effect was very inconclusive, but my temperature became more regular. I generally felt better today and could stay out of bed all day long. But lately I am continuously losing weight. Obviously there has been no improvement since April 1947, even though the cavity has become smaller [in her

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Bourdelais, Patrice. *Epidemics Laid Low: A History of What Happened in Rich Countries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) pg.130

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Moller, Beatrice to Payer, Hermann. Naroud 17 October 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

right lung]. The doctor does not raise hopes for improvement at all. Surgery is no longer possible. So I pass my time and wonder, how long will it go on like this?"

Shortly after writing this letter, Beatrice received another letter from Karl suggesting she attempt to return to the United States accompanied by Karl's long-term girlfriend, Pia Nagele. Beatrice responded in a letter dated February 10, 1949:

"Of course it would be great, if we could travel together- I would urgently need a person to accompany me. But Pia would agree to it, I can't expect it of her, can I?"¹¹⁹

Beatrice also was very concerned about the environment at her father's home, and if she would be welcomed. She had various questions about the condition of the home in her letter:¹²⁰

"If you would like to do something good for me, please write about our parent's house. In this regard I am not biased—with mother I'll get along, provided that she isn't afraid of me [afraid of transmission of TB]. My explanation for your not getting along with father is that you haven't acted diplomatically. Please let me know truly what you think about this. Will it work out well if I try with all my might? How are the housing conditions? Shall I have a nice room of my own? What does our father do?"

The next letter from Beatrice is dated in February 14, 1949. In the letter, Beatrice was overjoyed anticipating her return to the United States. Beatrice first wrote to Karl, announcing that Rosa Payer had responded to Beatrice, telling her that she would be welcome in their home in America:¹²¹

"Karl, do you share my happiness? I trust that everything will turn out fantastic. Without delay today I wrote uncle who is hopefully going to take the necessary steps as soon as possible. It will take at least four weeks which means that roughly in April or May I'll be able to travel. How wonderful it would be, if Pia could accompany me."

¹¹⁹ Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 10 February 1949. *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 14 February 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

In her letter to Hermann that same day, Beatrice revealed that she would have to conceal that she was afflicted with tuberculosis. She asked Hermann to prepare for her travel papers in Stuttgart:¹²²

"In the beginning of March I will look for the necessary documents in Stuttgart. This will probably take some weeks and the question is where to stay during that time, perhaps in a hospital. It is impossible to go to the UNRRA since the consulate musn't know about my illness, it might cause me serious trouble. At the consulate I must be as bold as brass."

Whatever travel plans Beatrice had, they were short-lived. Hermann and Frida received a letter from Beatrice on March 3, 1949 asking for Frida to come to Naroud. Frida found Beatrice with a high temperature, but "bearing that bad state calmly," Frida wrote to Karl.¹²³ Frida left Beatrice that night and returned to the sanitarium the next day to find Beatrice deceased, gone in the early morning:

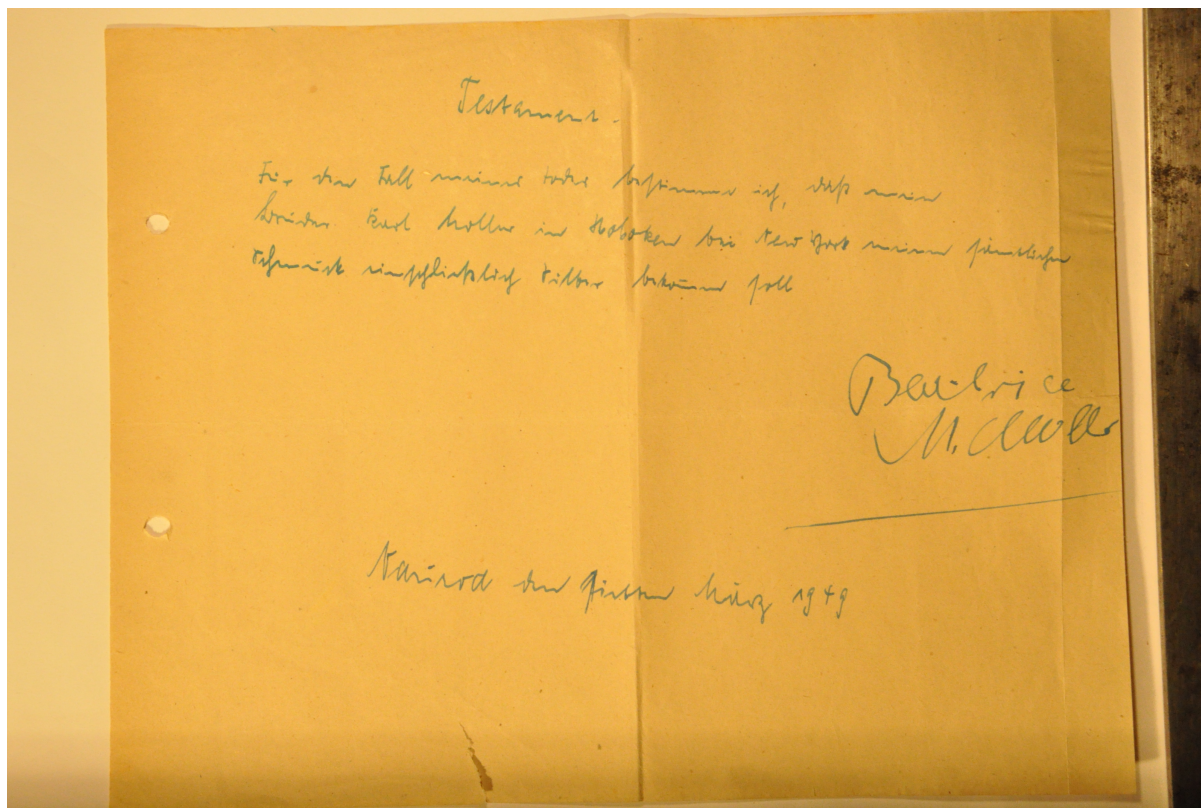
*"Dear Karl,
Today I have a very sad message for you. This morning at 6 a.m. our dear good Beatrice smoothly perished. As you can see from the attached letter (the March 5th letter), her state was very bad. The temperature, which on the day before yesterday had still been very high, dropped suddenly to 37 degrees Celsius. The doctors and nurses explained that this as a very bad signal. Yesterday it wasn't particularly bad because she was alleviated by injections. I stayed with her until 7:30 pm. From time to time she slept or asked about many things. I wanted to stay overnight, but she declined this – even the chief physician saw no need for it. This morning when I arrived in the sanatorium I was told Beate is no longer alive. A young woman (a nurse)- a superb person- was in her room and spoke a prayer on Beate's request and then she deceased without a struggle. Now she is laid out in mortuary of the sanitarium, looking beautiful and lovely like sleeping. It's a deep pain for all of us, but we should not grudge her after a life full of fear, hope and renunciation. Tomorrow she will be brought to Neuenstadt by the railway..."¹²⁴*

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Payer, Frida to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 5 March 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹²⁴ Payer, Frida to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 7 March 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

Beatrice's death came as a shock to the entire family. To this day, Hermann's children speak of Beatrice fondly and with a deep sense of loss. Beatrice was optimistic and spirited to her last day. Her last will and testament was quickly written the night she died, in which she left the few possessions she had to Karl. Below is Beatrice's will from that night:



The American Consulate confirmed Beatrice's death through official paperwork, which was sent to Karl and is depicted on the following page:¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Report of the Death of an American Citizen: Beatrice Moller, American Foreign Service. 21 April 1949, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

Consult Sections XIII-7 and XIII-8 and Notes of the Foreign Service Regulations

Stuttgart, Germany, April 21, 1949
(Place and date)

Name in full Beatrice M. Moller Occupation None
Native or naturalized Native Last known address
in the United States c/o George H. Moller, George St., Tennally, N.J.
Date of death March 7 0600 1949 Age 20 6/12
(Month) (Day) (Hour) (Minute) (Year) (As nearly as can be ascertained)
Place of death Naurod Lungenheilanstalt Naurod Germany
(Number and street) or (Hospital or hotel) (City) (Country)
Cause of death Tuberculosis of the lungs according to official death
(Include authority for statement)
certificate issued by the Office of Vital Statistics, Naurod.
Disposition of the remains Cemetery Neuenstadt/K. (buried)

Local law as to disinterring remains Apply to Friedhofsamt Neuenstadt/K.

Disposition of the effects In custody of Mr. Hermann Payer, c/o C.F. Hochstetter, Neuenstadt/K.

Person or official responsible for custody of effects and accounting therefor Hermann Payer

Informed by telegram:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP	DATE SENT

Copy of this report sent to:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP	DATE SENT
Mr. Hermann Payer	c/o C.F. Hochstetter, Neuenstadt/K.	uncle	Apr. 22, 1949
Mr. George Moller	George St., Tennally, N.J.	father	Apr. 22, 1949
Mr. Karl H. Moller	Stevens Institute, Castle, 202, Hoboken, N.J.	brother	Apr. 22, 1949

Traveling or residing abroad with relatives or friends as follows:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP
Mr. Hermann Payer	c/o C.F. Hochstetter, Neuenstadt/K.	uncle

Other known relatives (not given above):

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP
None		

This information and data concerning an inventory of the effects, accounts, etc., have been placed under File 330 in the correspondence of this office.

Remarks: Certificate of Identity and Registration issued to Beatrice M. Moller on June 30, 1947 at Stuttgart, Germany

(Continue on reverse if necessary.)

Service No.: 1274.

[SEAL]

No fee prescribed.

Vice Consul James D. Moffitt of the United States of America.
(Signature on all copies)
James D. Moffitt

NEW BEGINNING: AN AMERICAN LIFE (1950 – Onwards)

Chapter 7: Building a Family and a Legacy

Beatrice's death, in a way, was the end of a chapter in the relationship between the Moller and Payer families. According to letters, it appears that Karl threw himself into life in America to cope with the tragedy of his sister's death. In July, Karl met Hildegard, a German woman living in America with a very similar story: she had been kicked out of her home in America.¹²⁶

Hildegard

Given the present information, Hildegard was born somewhere in New York City. Circumstances led to her mother sending Hildegard to Leuterhausen, Germany, where she was raised by her grandmother. As a young adult Hildegard came back to America and graduated high school in Bergen County, New Jersey.

The story Hildegard told her daughters about how she and Karl met is as follows: Hildegard was on a hill in New York City, waving goodbye to her grandmother's ship. She was crying and very upset, when Karl and a friend of his approached her and started a conversation. After talking for a bit they discovered how much they had in common, and Karl asked Hildegard out.¹²⁷ They began dating in July of 1949, and were engaged months later in December. This quick engagement spurred a flurry of letters from Germany offering their congratulations from abroad. Karl shares in a letter dated December 16, 1949 that he is happy to no longer be alone. The couple married happily on June 6, 1950.

¹²⁶ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

¹²⁷ Moller, Karen. Telephone Interview. 3 April 2013.

After six months of being very ill, George Moller died soon after on December 31, 1951. In a letter from Frida to Karl earlier that year, Frida inquired about the conflict between father and son and reflected on how Beatrice would've wanted to see them reunited:

"How is now the connection to your father? This unfortunate discord and the behavior of your father gave her [Beatrice] great pain. 'I indeed should come over and I must bring them together' she still said in her last days. Therefore, if you can reasonably accomplish it, forget the previous matter. Invite each other over from time to time, then in the course of time it will become better- or is the complaint really that bad?"¹²⁸

It is doubtful that the two men reconciled. George's will left everything to his wife, Rosa excluding Karl from the will.

Life in Germany: A Debt Repaid

Karl continued to correspond with Hermann and the family in Germany, particularly about the state of life in Germany and the complicated inheritance of Mathilde (Karl's grandmother and Hermann/Sophie's mother) and the debt owed to Hermann concerning the cost of raising Karl and Beatrice. George's will and testament left no mention of repaying Hermann, and so Karl, Hermann and Rosa Moller, George's wife, worked to make a final agreement. After a strenuous debate over what was owed to Hermann, Rosa agreed to pay 5.500 Deutsche Marks to Hermann, which was transferred over on January 28, 1953. After this transfer, Rosa also agreed to transfer ownership of the plot of land in Neuenstadt to Karl, which was at that time a meadow with apple trees.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Payer, Frida to Moller, Karl. 14 September 1951, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript)

¹²⁹ Payer, Christian, *Chronology Family Moller/Möller 1920-1970: Letters, documents and personal remembrances collected in Neuenstadt am Kocher*, (unpublished, 2013).

Additionally, the Payer family continued to update Karl on the living conditions in Germany. A letter from Hermann to Karl described a recovering country:¹³⁰

"We hope that you can come soon and that finally a sustainable peace occurs in the world, which allows careless travelling to all. From our point things look black... In our shop we are very busy. The turnover is like it was last year. It should be really better, but we and other people are short of money."

Moving On

Karl graduated from Stevens Technical Institute in 1953 with a degree in both civil and mechanical engineering. He and Hildegard bought a house on 708 Pinewood Road in Union, New Jersey (which remains in the family to this day). Karl spent most of his professional career working for Western Electric, an electrical engineering and manufacturing company. He began working there on May 15, 1953. With a stable income and home, Karl and Hildegard had four beautiful daughters in the span of several years. Susan, their first daughter, was born November 16, 1953. Karen followed on March 18, 1956 and then Lori July 31, 1957 and Linda on August 13, 1958

As a family, they went on extensive road trips around the country and had a strong commitment to school.

Hildegard was diagnosed with breast cancer in July of 1970, when she was only 40 years old. She struggled with the disease for ten years, undergoing chemotherapy, radiation and a radical mastectomy.¹³¹ Hildegard was able to watch her last daughter, Linda, graduate from college and died a few weeks later on June 29, 1980, a loss that was deeply

¹³⁰ Payer, Hermann to Moller, Karl. Neuenstadt, 18 December 1950, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

¹³¹ Moller, Karen. Telephone Interview. 3 April 2013.

felt by the entire family. Karl continued to live at the family home, and died August 27, 1984 of a heart attack, a proud father and resolute man.

PRESENT

Epilogue: An Enduring Legacy

Karl and Hildegard in front of their family home in Union, NJ



Karl and Hildegard's four daughters, from left to right: Lori, Linda, Susan and Karen.



The story of Karl, Beatrice and Hildegard lives on through the close relationships between sisters and with the Payer family in Germany. Over the past decades, the Moller sisters

have visited Germany 3 times, maintaining the transnational connection fostered by Karl and Beatrice's 'adoption' into the family. Hermann and Frida went on to have three children: Fritz, Suzanne, and Christian. Additionally, Hermann's brother, Adolf Payer and his wife Eugenie had children who got to know Karl very well and continue their friendship with the Moller sisters. Adolf and Eugenie's daughter, Rose Pauschinger, has been a tremendous resource to the sisters concerning the life of young Karl: He and Rose were very close. Additionally, Jörg Remppis has been a great contributor in compiling the family tree. Jörg passed away while this volume was being written. These individuals and their children have been integral in maintaining the invaluable ties overseas. They have been hospitable and patient resources in explaining and investigating Karl and Beatrice's life in Germany. Christian's daughter, Sybille has been invaluable in helping re-establish the international connection with Karen in when they became pen pals in the fall of 1984. The Moller sisters hope that these connections will continue as the next generation grows up- of which I, Allison Hilda Mooney, am a part.

The section that follows contains the personal reflections of the daughters about their father, and how this international project has enabled them to grow in their understanding of the man their father was.

**Karl H. Moller,
My Father**

By Susan Moller Rogers

Firstborn of Karl and Hildegard

Mother of Chris and Eric

Pharmacist, Cancer Survivor, Health-related fitness advocate

Lifelong passion for music, athletics and dance

My father was one whom I consider to be the archetypal beloved American father figure of his era in many ways; but in addition, he had a traits more closely linked with his German background and upbringing, as well, making him a Dad with qualities that were endearing in his own understated, charming ways...reassuring, to be respected, and at times, a bit to be feared, with a rather brusque, no-nonsense demeanor, if his expected standards were not met. To me, he was a mentor with my recognition of him as a good and fair man, disciplined and a hard worker. He was a responsible parent who lived up to the lofty standard of the dependable head of household breadwinner, the one who quietly and dutifully cared for our mother during her illness with cancer, and raising his daughters to be disciplined, responsible, and capable of living independent lives through strength of character, diligence in attaining an education, and hard work.

I think my father's European-style upbringing in Germany helped to shape this profile of how I remember "Daddy"...that mix of Germanic no-nonsense-style sternness and high expectations of each of us among his four daughters, while also displaying his charming, genteel kind of fatherly caring and tenderness at times that made his blue eyes beam with happiness and his dimples show when he smiled. When I think of my father and all of his qualities and perspectives, I envision him as quite strongly that of an individual with an "Old World" German upbringing that surely helped to shaped him into the man he

grew up to become..... but somehow he also remained flexible enough to adapt to life supporting his family – our mother and their four girls – in the American landscape.

My father's legacy is what I would characterize as certain Old World sensibilities, which I would say my sisters and I each absorbed and took along in our lives as a gift, as a part of our growing up experiences within our family. Through our father's influence in our respective lives, as well as that of our likewise German-American mother, we each achieved a start in life that both of our parents wished for their four daughters....as strong, independent women who had the means to responsibly support ourselves, to make wise decisions for ourselves, and to undertake life with vitality and resilience. I think of these qualities as precious gifts that I cherish having received from my parents. When facing life's challenges, along with our blessings, it is comforting to know that our father's legacy lives on in each of us, now as women in our 50's. We each had the means and the will to smoothly transition into adulthood, to achieve rewarding milestones, to overcome adversities, and to live lives that have brought us our respective fulfillments.

If our father were still alive, I'm sure he would feel proud knowing that in each of own unique ways, my sisters and I have carried on a bit of who he was, in each of us.



Now I understand why...

Reflections of a great man, Karl Henry Moller, my father

By: Karen B. Moller

Second Daughter to Karl and Hildegard

Educator of Industrial Arts and Technology Education, specializing in woodworking

Lover of animals, nature, reading,

motorcycling, counted cross stitching and sewing

My name is Karen Beatrice Moller-Miles. I am the second daughter of Karl and Hildegard Moller. I am proud of my name because I was named after my father and his sister, Beatrice. Our parents thought I would be the boy they had hoped for, but turned out to be a girl, so they removed the "l" from Karl and replaced it with "en". Although I was not what they had wished for, I became their son anyway...

I have learned so much from my parents, but since this paper is about my father, I will focus only on him. I will be referring to my father as Karl.

Karl was an intensely private man. He was very much loved by me, but also very much feared. I spent most of my life trying to make him proud of me by always working at his side when he was involved in his home "jobs". We lived in a very strict German home that was also very frugal in a variety of ways. Yet, our parents were extremely generous in our education and not just from school. Karl was a true nature lover and constantly referred to the beautiful places we visited as "God's County". They travelled us throughout

the United States on a quest to see all of them and included as many National Parks and Forests as possible. Each summer was an adventure for us due to the careful planning Karl made on his quest to see America. We also did not see it without challenges, we roughed it with a pop-up camper and cramped quarters but I would never have changed a thing. We were nomads for a month, and I loved it. I learned the beauty of Americana, the wonder of nature, and the togetherness of family.

At home, Karl saw my abilities with my hands as opposed to my mind and together he taught me all the skills I possess today. I learned things girls just didn't do back in the day. Auto mechanics, electricity, masonry, carpentry, painting, brick laying, metal working are all examples of things he showed and taught me over the years. When I entered college, I wanted to be a forest ranger. Karl was furious with me that I chose such a non-profitable career. So I decided to give Industrial Arts a try. This was during the 70's and I had never taken a shop class before- girls were not permitted to, although I fought the high school to allow me. So, my first shop class was in college. Being the only female in these classes, everyone thought I would be a failure. But I succeeded because of everything I learned from Karl. When I graduated with a teaching degree, Karl was even more disappointed that I became a teacher. Before his untimely death, he did see my classroom and I believe he was a little impressed with what I do. I have been teaching woodshop in the same school now for over 34 years.

After Karl's death, I was devastated, as we all were. I did not know what to do except contact our family in Germany to keep up the communication Karl had always maintained. Karl loved all his relatives there and one of our trips during a summer vacation was to meet them all. It was a trip of a lifetime and he was finally able to go back to his

second home. We made a return trip after our mother died and I can't remember a time he was so happy. It was a wonderful gathering. Karl never spoke about his past to us and when I used to ask, he would not answer or become angry- so I would drop it. I began looking into his past the best I could and discovered some of the information that is contained in this paper. After receiving information from Germany, especially from Christian, I began to understand why Karl was so hard on all of us. His childhood was a devastating one- one we never knew about and may never know all about. With all he had been through as a child, he still became one of the most brilliant minds I have ever known and became a very successful and respected man. As a teacher, I have seen many students with difficult pasts go down the wrong path. Karl had such horrors as a child, yet rose above this. But his lack of emotion- verbal and physical towards us now makes sense to me. He certainly did love us, but he never told us.

To conclude, I will always have part of daddy in me. His legacy lives in me every day. I miss both my parents and think of them all the time- every day. The one thing daddy told me as I was leaving for college is "You only get out of education what YOU put into it." I have never forgotten this and refer to this quote often with my students. He will always be my greatest teacher and forever the handsome man with the great dimples and the bluest of eyes. And I will always love him...



How I Remember my Father

By: Lori Mooney

*Third Daughter to Karl and Hildegard
Proud Mother of Allison and Andrew Mooney
AT&T Management Associate, Career Mom, &
Adventure Travel Expert*

I remember my father as a very intelligent man with many strong skill sets. He was a role model to all of us (children) in a sense of instilling a strong moral makeup in each of us, and on how he was an example of being self sufficient and resourceful. He was caring, and responsible to the needs of the family, but not overly warm in a physical sense. We knew he loved us deeply, but it was not often that he expressed this love in a form of a hug, etc. He cared deeply about our welfare, and our ability to strive to obtain our own sense of self-sufficiency, and a good life of our own. Education was of utmost importance, as well as helping with the needs of the family. Family togetherness was very important to him, and showing us the beauty of the world with our yearly trips out west was a gift he gave each of us. There was a sense of hardness about him, but we all knew that he had a very difficult childhood, and withstood many terrible challenges in his upbringing that made him this way.

Delving into his past and investigating his time in Europe has shaped my perspective and understanding of him as a person. Connecting with his family in Germany has given us great insight as to what shaped who he was. He had strong ties with his relatives in Germany. We now know that they loved him deeply, and supported him emotionally during the traumatic time of war, as well as losing his mother and sister at an early age. His resourcefulness in part was a result of having to leave the country as a boy, and live with extended family, without a mother and father. He was asked to work hard

during the years in Germany to help the family, and gave his all. From what we learned, his father was not a very warm man, but was a self-made highly successful businessman, which I am sure rubbed off on my Dad. A certain sadness that he carried with him during his life must have come from the sad story of his mother, and also his sister dying of T.B., and his own inability to have a good relationship with his father. However, my father was remarkable in his ability to persevere and thrive despite all of the hardships that he endured. He was a good person, who actually did have a great sense of humor and mischief about him during his childhood.

Our father experienced the love of his family, and also sadness, with his wife being ill with cancer for so many years. His legacy is having provided for his family, enjoyed strong friendships and connections with his Germany relatives, and bringing up four daughters in a way that ensured their success in creating a life of their own. He is example of how one can persevere despite extreme hardships, and rise above difficulties to achieve success and happiness. The four Moller girls each carry a part of Karl with them to this day, and I am reminded of his resourcefulness, strength and wisdom as these same traits are displayed by our own children; his grandchildren. Therein, his legacy lives on.

Memories of Karl Moller

Written by: Linda Galaro

*Fourth Daughter of Karl and Hildegard
Mother of Joseph and Katherine Galaro
Electrical Engineer / Software Systems Engineer*

It has been almost 29 years since I have seen my father, Karl Moller. He died suddenly of a heart attack just a month and a half before my wedding. My father was large part of my entire life, and he shaped my life, until he died when I was 27 years old. I was living at home with my father at this time, taking care of him and the household, after the death of my mother several years earlier. I became very close to him over those few years, and I will always cherish the time that I had with him.

I have very fond memories of this man who I had total and unconditional love and respect for. I know that the best qualities of who I am today can be directly attributed to the time I spent with my wonderful father and also my loving mother. Here are some adjectives to describe my father: intelligent, precise, respectful, hard-working, demanding, strict, unforgiving, disciplined, loving (in his own way), supportive, responsible, in-charge, trustworthy, honest, integrity.

Although my parents were both born in the United States, they were sent to Germany during their younger years (for different reasons) to grow up with their extended families. They both were instilled with the “old world” European virtues, and as such, my sisters and I grew up in what was truly a first generation German immigrant household.

I consider myself lucky to have experienced this upbringing. As an American, I had all the opportunities that our country has to offer, with the freedom to choose and embrace all

that is good and if I wanted to, all that is not so good. I was taught, especially by my father, to be responsible, work hard, always strive to be better, show respect, be strong, and do what is right and moral. My father taught me to not choose the easy path, but rather the right path, and to work hard until I reached success. In a German immigrant household, I learned to love and respect my heritage. I loved the German festivities, parties, songs, and food. I treasured learning directly from my father about how he grew up in war-torn Europe, and about his family in Europe.

Life at home was not a democracy – my father was the “king” of the house, and my sisters and I obeyed him always. However, my father also made sure that we had fun during vacations, where we truly enjoyed ourselves as a family. We took many cross-country camping trips, and these were my favorite. On these trips, we learned about the beauty and heritage of this country, and how to survive together living in small quarters. My father also made sure that we helped, respected, and visited our grandparents. My parents built a beautiful mountain house in Pennsylvania as a weekend retreat for the family. We had countless wonderful times together there.

My life has been shaped by so many experiences that I have had with my father. For example: When I would bring home a report card with straight A's, my father would say “Why didn't you get A+'s?” When my mother died, and I couldn't start my first day of work as an Engineer, my father warned me to “not cry” when I called my employer and “don't ever show your weaknesses”. He stood next to me when I made that call to give me the strength I needed. If I ever made a decision that he didn't agree with, he would say “Well, you have made your bed, so you better lay in it.” When I told him that I wanted to go to college and be an Electrical Engineer like him, he said “prove it”. He bought me a radio

electronics kit to build from scratch, and I built it! When I graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree, although he rarely gave complements, he told me that he was so proud of me.

My father's legacy is truly his children, and how we each live our lives. I know that I rarely go a day without remembering some experience with him, and using the wisdom that he instilled in me to make the right choices, every day.

Final Thoughts

Karl and Beatrice's childhood quickly spiraled into a life filled with uncertainty and struggle. Hermann's challenge of raising two additional children along with his own in the midst of wartime is difficult to imagine. The letters in this volume chronicle his immense effort to ensure the safety and well-being of his sister's children. As a result, Hermann's relationship with Karl and Beatrice blurs between uncle and second father.

Karl and Beatrice's experiences in Europe were very different based on their unique circumstances during and after World War II. Karl was vulnerable as a young boy and growing man in the midst of the influence and recruiting efforts of the NSDAP. At the end of the war, Karl was an American citizen in an area in which Americans received mixed favor. Beatrice, on the other hand, had her fate sealed when she contracted tuberculosis. While suffering from a stigmatized disease, Beatrice had to struggle with the poor treatment she received during the war in sanitariums and the shortage of medical supplies and doctors after the war. In the end, time was Beatrice's ultimate enemy as she received streptomycin too late.

Despite the tragedy of Sophie's death, Beatrice's death, and George's estranged relationship with his children, a thriving and resilient family grew through Karl in America. From the reflections of his daughters and those who knew him, it is clear that Karl's experiences and disappointments in Europe and America created a man who was hardened and steadfast. His ties to Germany remained strong throughout the rest of his life, and have left behind an international legacy and relationship that continues to grow to this day.



A photo of Karl during military service in Italy and Hildegard in a garden in the U.S.

SCHUTZPASS	
Inhaber dieses Schutzpasses besitzt die schweizerische Staatsangehörigkeit nicht.	
<p>Photographie</p>  <p>Unterschrift des Schutzpassinhabers:</p> <p><i>Karl Henry Moller</i></p>	<p>Schweizerische Gesandtschaft in Deutschland Abtlg. Schutzmachangelegenheiten 590</p> <p>Schutzpass Nr. <i>U.S.A. 1945/07</i></p> <p>Staatsangehörigkeit des Schutzpassinhabers: <i>Vereinigte Staaten v. Amerika</i></p> <p>Name: <i>Moller</i></p> <p>Vorname: <i>Karl Henry</i></p> <p>Geburtsdatum: <i>5. Dezember 1926</i></p> <p>Geburtsort: <i>Longwood, N.Y., U.S.A.</i></p> <p>Familienstand: <i>ledig</i></p> <p>Heimatort: <i>/</i></p> <p>Wohnort: <i>Neuenstadt / Kocher</i></p> <p>Beruf: <i>Schüler</i></p> <p>Bemerkungen: <i>/</i></p> <p>Dieser Schutzpass ist gültig bis: <i>18. Mai 1945</i></p>
<p>Personenbeschreibung</p> <p>Körpergröße: <i>181 cm</i></p> <p>Haare: <i>brun</i></p> <p>Augen: <i>blau</i></p> <p>Besondere Kenn.</p>	<p>Der Inhaber dieses Schutzpasses darf die Schweiz nur mit dem Visum einer schweizerischen Auslandsvertretung betreten.</p> <p>Ausgestellt am <i>8. Januar</i> 1945</p> <p>Schweizerische Gesandtschaft Abtlg. Schutzmachangelegenheiten L.A.</p> <p>Stempel:  Unterschrift: <i>H. Huber</i></p>

These *Schutzpass* papers were issued to Karl and Beatrice by the Swiss Consulate in 1945 as a means of verifying their American citizenship.

SCHUTZPASS

Inhaber dieses Schutzpasses besitzt die schweizerische Staatsangehörigkeit nicht.

Photographie



Unterschrift des Schutzpassinhabers:

Schweizerische Gesandtschaft in Deutschland
Abtlg. Schutzmachtangelegenheiten 591

Schutzpass Nr. *U.S.A. 1945/68*

Staatsangehörigkeit des Schutzpassinhabers:

Vereinigte Staaten v. Amerika

Name: *Möller*

Vorname: *Beatrice*

Geburtsdatum: *18. September 1928*

Geburtsort: *Tomball, N.J., U.S.A.*

Familienstand: *ledig*

Heimatort:

Wohnort: *Neuenstadt/Kocher*

Beruf: *Schülerin*

Bemerkungen:

Dieser Schutzpass ist gültig bis:

17. Mai 1945

Personenbeschreibung

Körpergrösse: *177 cm*

Haare: *blond*

Augen: *blau*

Besondere Kennzeichen:

Der Inhaber dieses Schutzpasses darf die Schweiz nur mit dem
Visum einer schweizerischen Auslandsvertretung betreten.

Ausgestellt am *8. Januar* 19 *45*

Schweizerische Gesandtschaft
Abtlg. Schutzmachtangelegenheiten

Stempel:

Unterschrift:

[Signature]

Letter Appendix

A special thank you to the Moller sisters, who agreed to loan me original family letters to complete this project.

Note about photos: All photos belong to the Moller Family Collection, and were found in the house in Union, NJ, where Karl and Hildegard raised their daughters.

Letters Included in Appendix:

Moller, Sophie to Moller, Mathilde. 1 September 1933, *Moller Family Collection*,
(unpublished manuscript).

Mahler, Philip to Whom it May Concern. 22 September 1937, *Moller Family Collection*
(unpublished manuscript)

Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. "Second Letter" 25 August 1939, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. "Fourth Letter" 1 Sept. 1939, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Honaker, S.W. to Moller, Karl and Beatrice. "Third Letter" (undated) *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Payer, Hermann to Mrs. Major Fleming. 29 September 1946, *Moller Family Collection*
(unpublished manuscript)

Payer, Hermann to American Consulate, Stuttgart. 10 November 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Painter, Carvel to Moller, Karl. 19 April 1946, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Payer, Hermann to American Consulate in Stuttgart, Germany. 16 June 1947, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

Payer, Hermann to Field Master of American Red Cross. 30 June 1947, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Payer, Helga to Moller, Karl. Stuttgart, 8 August 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 18 Aug 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller, Beatrice to Payer, Hermann. Naroud 17 October 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

Payer, Eugenie to Moller, Karl. Stuttgart, 22 August 1948, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 14 February 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller, Beatrice to Payer, Hermann, Naroud, 14 February 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller, Beatrice to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 10 February 1949. *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Payer, Frida to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 5 March 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Payer, Frida to Moller, Karl. Naroud, 7 March 1949, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

Payer, Hermann to Moller, Karl. Neuenstadt, 18 December 1950, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

Moller, Karl to Payer, Hermann. 5 June 1976, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript)

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Report of the Death of an American Citizen: Sophie Moller, American Foreign Service. 17 September 1937, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

Report of the Death of an American Citizen: Beatrice Moller, American Foreign Service. 21 April 1949, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript).

Schutzpass: Beatrice Moller, Swiss Consulate. Issued 8 January 1945, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript)

Schutzpass: Karl Moller, Swiss Consulate. Issued 8 January 1945, *Moller Family Collection*, (unpublished manuscript)

Separation Qualification Record: Karl Henry Moller, Army of the United States. Undated, *Moller Family Collection* (unpublished manuscript).

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