

# Nürnberg Alumni Association Online Archive

## Nürnberg American High School

a U.S. Army dependents school formerly located in Fürth/Bavaria, Germany

### 1950-51 School Year

5th year of the school's existence

Graduating Class of 1951

### **This File: Memoirs, Historical Articles, Memorabilia**

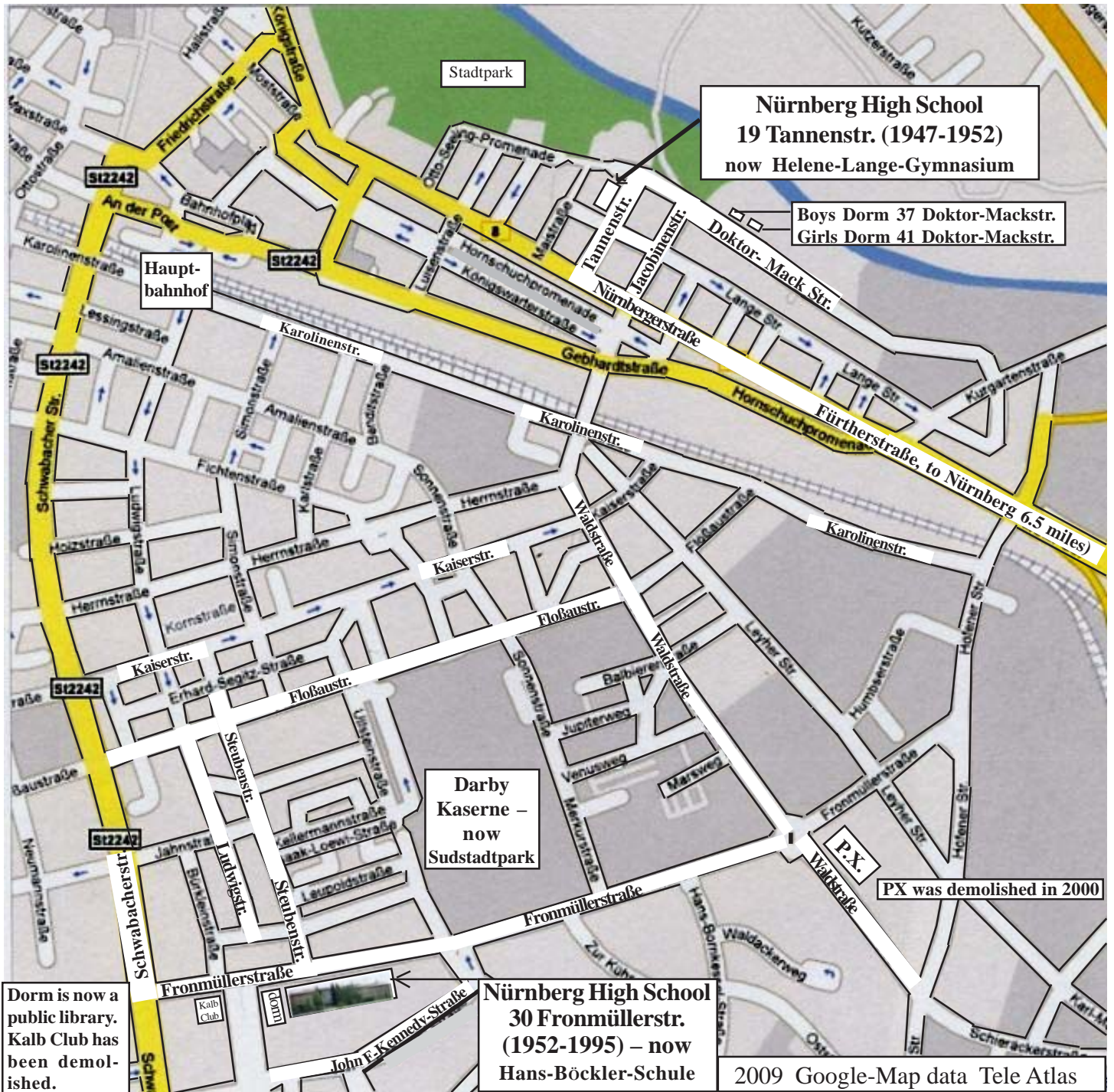
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For information on the Nürnberg Alumni Association and to access other files from the Online Archive, go to [www.nurnbergeagles.org](http://www.nurnbergeagles.org).

# Map of Fürth/Bayern showing two of the three sites of Nürnberg American High School



# Address to the 1990 Nürnberg High Reunion by Ralph Lurvey, Class of 1951 Dallas, Texas June 22 - 24

The Nürnberg Alumni Association was organized in 1987 when founder Terry Jorgensen persuaded 119 NHS alumni to come to a reunion in Atlanta, Georgia. The reunion in Dallas was the second NAA reunion, with 238 alumni attending. Several speeches were given at this event, including this one by alumnus Ralph "Peter" Lurvey. The address has been edited for print from Lurvey's extant typescript. – Bob McQuitty, NAA historian/archivist

Ga'day... I'm Peter or Ralph, whichever, Lurvey from Melbourne, Australia. Nürnberg High - THE Class of 1951. My wife Isabel, a dinky-die Aussie, and I are pleased to have made this 10,000 mile trip to take part in this great reunion in Dallas, Texas. I would like to share with you my story entitled "A Tale of a Slow Learner or 40 Years at Nürnberg High."

I first arrived at Nürnberg High in January 1950. Like most we stayed at the Hilton Hotel at Fort Hamilton prior to departing from Brooklyn, N.Y. on a ten-day cruise aboard the USAT *General Patton*, or *General Rose*, or was it *Geiger* or *Callan*, with the exotic destination of Bremerhaven, Germany. The next port of call was Bad Kissingen, the Army Ellis Island of Germany. Dad got his assignment to Schwabach, and my sister Nancy and I got our assignment to Nürnberg High. A home was found for us in Roth, from which we commuted daily to Nürnberg High in a *Shäferhund*, the Army occupation answer to Greyhound. You remember those converted 6 x 6 trucks?

Two thoughts have remained with me all these years of my first impressions of Nürnberg High. First, it was very drab. I had just left a sprawling campus at Mount Tamalpius in California which would make many small colleges look sparse. They had all the facilities that one could ever hope for – both academic and athletic. Nürnberg High was a school converted from a hospital that had luckily survived World War II with only a few bomb holes prior to becoming a school for the American occupation troops. All the grey and drabness soon weaned [waned?] as new friendships developed. I quickly learned to love Nürnberg High and I think that affair has gone unchecked for 40 years. My second thought was that Nürnberg High was in fact not in Nürnberg and never has been. It was and still is in Fürth.

What Nürnberg High may have lacked in facilities it certainly made up in adventure. Adventure and excitement to say the least, traveling throughout Europe playing basketball, baseball, field and track, and football. Games in Munich, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Berlin and Bremerhaven, Germany. We also played in Linz and Vienna, Austria. How can any of us forget Corporal Andrew Haggerty, our Army co-ordinator cum team leader and mother hen all rolled into one. He organized our rail passes and billets in *Kasernes*, paid for our meals when we ran out of money, rounded up the strays in each *Bahnhof*, and held our hand in victory or defeat. If Cpl. Haggerty had been in Hitler's Army he would have received the Iron Cross with clusters.

Jick Rickard, Class of '50, told me that he believes that our Cpl. Andrew Haggerty may have gone into the priesthood. If that is the case then I would like to think that Father Haggerty is now helping boys to shape up at Notre Dame. Even after 40 years I still recall our unexpected triumph over Wiesbaden to put us into the 1950 basketball finals against what's their name – Frankfurt. Oh well, you can't win them all.

How I learend to the hate the Class of 1950: They won the EUCOM Six Man Football Conference only to force the class of 1951 into the 11 man conference. Well, the class of 1951 only had 10 male students and 10 female students. Everyone played: seniors, juniors, sophomores, freshmen and all were stars — sometimes black and blue. Our quarterback and team captain, Bill Eckert, suffered a broken thumb in the final big game at Linz, Austria. What a game – in rain, sleet, and snow! At any rate we managed to scare Linz to the tune of ZIP all.



I wonder how many of you know that Nürnberg High played with the Harlem Globetrotters? In the summer of 1950 the Korean War had broken out – our fathers were put on alert along the Czech and East/West German borders in Hof and Grafenwöhr. While they played war games, we played our grand game: the preliminary basketball game to the traveling Harlem Globetrotters in the outdoor stadium. We managed to get a team together and a scrub team came up from Munich and we all just played for the hell of it. It didn't matter who won or lost. Just to be on the same court with the Globetrotters made us all feel like champions.

Sport was not the only game at Nürnberg High. There was the dorm. A whole new world opened for me. Arriving at the Nürnberg *Hauptbahnhof* on a Sunday evening, then off on the long tram ride on Number 16 to the dorm. I remember that number as it was also my jersey number for sport. There were two dorms at Dr. Mack Strasse, one for the gals and one for the guys. It was convenient being next door to each other.

Our mess hall was in the school basement. I remember one morning at breakfast when a little sophomore challenged me as to who could eat the most grapefruit halves. I loved grapefruit, so I knew I had that smart little Clark Valentine, one of two black guys at school. I lost. He ate 21 halves. And I thought he only liked watermelons. Just yesterday, Katy or someone from the class of '53 told me that Valentine came from Battle Creek, Michigan, the home of Wheaties, the breakfast of champions.

I'm sure that each class recalls Senior Skip Day. This did not seem particularly equitable to the rebels in the dorm in June 1950. I wouldn't have a clue who organized the Dorm Skip Day of 1950. Every boy joined in and to the best of my knowledge the girls were left in the dark. Following breakfast it was off on the trams to Hitler's Stadium and the olympic swimming pool where each boy gained manhood by going off the 10 meter platform. The M.P.'s were alerted and took us to task as a Korean War exercise. We managed to slip through the M.P. network in time to return for supper. Dorm boys and parents alike were counseled, and even after 40 years my Dad has not seen any humor to this episode.

In the school year 1950-1951 the dorms became more refined. We had a merit/demerit program, whereby good deeds were rewarded. Quiet during study hours, keeping a clean room, coming in on time were all pluses. It was never made clear on some matters being a merit or demerit. Putting snow into the Dorm Supervisor's sleeping bag, dropping water bombs down the stairway onto the Dorm Supervisor – just to name a few.

But then all was not bad. We put on a musical comedy play, "Step Lively," at the Nürnberg Opera House and all that participated gained 30 merits. Accumulation of 40 or more merits was good for a night out. After 40 years I finally have enough merits. That is why I am in Dallas.

The class of '51 was democratic; we learned to divide and conquer. We split the girls vote. Class officers were President - Bill Eckert, Vice President - Charlie Hitzelberger, Secretary - Jacqueline Surratt, our workaholic, and Treasurer - Ralph Lurvey. Dues were \$5.00 a month. Bill asked me last night what ever happened to our class kitty? I would like to report to all of you right now that American Express stopped paying interest on that account in 1961, and most of you have not paid your monthly dues for some 40 years.

Spring was in the air and graduation for the class of 1951 was just around the corner. My academic standing was deteriorating to the point that our principal, Mr. John Charlson, or was it the superintendent, Mr. Carl Parker, called me into his oak-lined chambers for a fireside chat or counseling. Even after 40 years I still recall his parallelism. Now, Ralph, just like the "E" on a fuel gauge does not stand for enough, an "F" on your report card does not stand for fantastic. Certainly sophomore geography should be going down a little easier than what I was doing. As a parting remark, he wondered how we would fare against Heidelberg in our next baseball game. We won 21 to 17. A low scoring game — for our opponents.

June rolled along for the big event at Stein Castle. Dr. Warren Robbins gave the graduation address at the commencement exercise, "Are You 16 Years Old or 16,000?" It has taken a long time for that message to get home. Perhaps 40 years is not a long time for a slow learner from Nürnberg High. Everyone received their diploma, but Ron Valimaki opened his only to find a note that read when he paid his mess bill of \$22 he would get his certificate. Ron, did you ever get your diploma?

June 1951 also brought a close to a chapter for Nürnberg High. The doors that had been open at "MADCHEN LYZEUM HANDELSCHULE"\* at 19 Tannenstrasse were to be closed after five years as the home for Nürnberg High. [More accurately, 4 1/2 years. The Tannenstrasse school closed when the new school on Fronmüllerstrasse opened Jan. 3, 1952 – Archivist]

I look back 40 years and recall so many other little tales. The early morning queue or line of teachers at the lister bag. Something to do with what went on at the Hotel Metro the night before. The lister bag was our canvas bag of drinking water, pure from the waters of the Regnitz.

The 1950 Senior Prom at Stein Castle where all the boys showed up in coat and tie and blue jeans.

The script – Military Payment Certificates – MPC's used for money. Each \$10 note had to be signed for by serial number at the cashier's desk at the PX. I managed to do that once.

The secret society, the fraternal order of the B.B.B.'s. Bill Eckert, Stan Caldwell, Alfred Benavides, Ron Valimaki, Charlie Hitzelberger, and Ralph Lurvey. Meetings were held in the local *Gasthaus* behind the PX, sort of a "happy hour." Even after 40 years our lips are sealed.

I have often told the story concerning the only teacher that had a car. It was just a little puddle jumper. Late one day Ron Valimaki, Floyd Brown, and a couple of others, and I picked up Miss Claris Glick's car and placed it on the sidewalk or was it inside the school gates? At any rate, the next time I told the story her car had been carried to the first floor, and in later years it made it up the landing. I am sure if I live long enough and someone will listen, that little car will have been carried all the way to the top floor of Nürnberg High.

In closing, I only hope that each of you will enjoy your memories of Nürnberg High. If you only enjoy them half as much as I have, then being a slow learner or 40 years at Nürnberg High will be a small price to have paid for such lasting memories.

May you all continue to soar as Eagles.

\*MADCHENIYZEUM ... HANDELSSCHULE is inscribed above the main door of the building at 19 Tannenstrasse. The letter before the "Y" in the first word appears to be an "I," but "L" makes sense, for "Lyzeum" is German for the English "lyceum," a word deriving from Greek and referring originally to the school outside Athens where Aristotle taught. Duden, the German dictionary equivalent of Webster, translates the inscription as "girls' high school, commercial school." We would perhaps call it a vocational high school for girls.

– Archivist



# My Return to Nürnberg

by Ralph "Pete" Lurvey ('51)



*Ed. note: We've all harbored the dream fantasy of returning to NHS with the friends we had when we were there so many years ago. We hope you enjoy Ralph "Pete" Lurvey's Christmas 1994 letter, describing how it might have been on one last trip before the school closes. Pete's trip took him to the old school location at 19 Tannenstrasse,*

Some eagles do fly; some eagles ride the train. It was mid-morning Friday, Oct. 21, 1994, on a beautiful autumn day as I departed Bamberg *Hauptbahnhof* for Nürnberg High School. The Bavarians were enjoying another *Altweibersommertag* (Indian Summer day). I purposely selected a slow train, stopping at all the towns along the way, just like the weekly train ride to the dorm that was my home away from home 10 months of the year back in 1950-51. Perhaps it was the memories or the soothing clickety-clack of *die Bahn* combined with the warmth of the sun that lulled me into sleep with such pleasant dreams. I guess the conductor woke me as the train approached Fürth, "*Nächste Haltstelle, Fürth Hauptbahnhof. Aussteigen bitte.*"

The friendly people at Fürth Hauptbahnhof Information tried to be helpful with my request for directions to Nürnberg High School in Fürth. A detailed wall map pinpointed Tannenstrasse and Dr. Mackstrasse. *Ein Käsebrötchen* und *ein Apfel* in the park gave me the energy to make my way to NHS. Somehow I approached the school from a different direction from what I was accustomed to 43 years ago. But there it was, even better and larger than I remembered. It is now [Helene Lange Gymnasium, a comprehensive high school (both academic and vocational). – Archivist]

Waiting patiently was my friend and dorm roommate, Ron Valimaki, who scoffed at me for being late, adding that most of the guys were already looking around. We walked along Dr. Mackstrasse. The football

practice field is now part of a lovely park, where Alfred Benavides was taking a few practice swings with his seven iron. The boys' dorm has also given way to the park. "It's gone, all gone," exclaimed Bob Gross, looking quite bewildered.

We continued on our way to find a dejected Jim Savident in front of the former girls' dorm. Returning along Dr. Mackstrasse toward the school, we spotted Virgil Peelman, standing in front of a new *Sporthalle* on an area that once was our baseball practice field. Resting on the infamous high-backed concrete seat, where most students who ever attended NHS in 1948-51 had their pictures taken, was Stanley Caldwell. An often overlooked bronze statue of a teen-age student reading her lesson is sheltered by bushes. Stanley Lewark said it reminded him of Ann Bragan or Ann O'Roark showing me which way was right side up in geometry.

Just over the front entrance to our NHS is a stone sculpture of a girl playing a mandolin, her broken left hand still not repaired from a wildly thrown, rock-filled snowball, during a battle between dorm boys and bused boys. With a wink of her eye, the statue became life-like as she beckoned me inside. I went up to the headmaster's office where I was made welcome to wander around and have a good look.

The hallways are all freshly lined with ceramic tiles and the floors sparkle with a new surface. *Der Hausmeister* and *die Putzfrau* recounted the big problem of removing oil stains as a result of a teacher's car being parked on the top landing back in 1951. "*Viel*

*Arbeit!*" Gone was the lister bag in the hallway that supplied our pure drinking water from the Regnitz.

In the former classroom of social science teacher Warren Robbins, Jack Phillips found a wardrobe with a well-preserved heart-shaped inscription: "Jim S + Katy." Jim quickly claimed that Katy was a great woodcarver.

Ghost voices echoed throughout the hallway: Fowler, Hitzelberger, Hebner, Jones, Jordon, Lysaught, Philbrick, Hejno. Just like Santa calling his reindeer. Nürnberg is much, much more than just Christkindlesmarkt at Yuletide. If you listened carefully, you could hear whispers of reindeer who cry: Outsen, Alexander, Surratt, Bandt, Redman, Minthorn, McCarthy, Hembree.

Was that the sound of music coming from the auditorium? I thought there would be a pep rally with Coach Ziffero giving last minute explanations to the guys prior to the Friday game. Upon opening the door, however, what should I behold but a dancing class. Upon leaving the school, Bill Eckert philosophically remarked that the clover leaf stone feature over the main portal to NHS remains as a symbol of luck and hope that NHS has brought to so many.

Nearby is located Gasthaus zum Adler. It is now a venue for dart games. Time passed with stories of bygone years, unfolding many secrets. The bell rang and we all knew it was once again, "Time, gentlemen, time. *Aufwiedersehen.*"

As we parted, the day appeared to have changed, or was it just my eyes that clouded over, as I turned to have one last look at Nürnberg High.



# Germany after World War II – Recollections from the Early Years

by Ann Marie O’Roark, ’51

## Part I. Getting There: Flying on a Wing and a Christmas Carol

Ann O’Roark, her brother Dulaney, and her sister Elizabeth (“Betsy”) were part of the special military orders received by their mother. Families were waiting to board ships for Europe when word came that a group of families had been selected to be flown to Germany as a special Christmas surprise gift for the U.S. forces assigned to EUCOM post-war occupation duty.

Our dad, D.L. O’Roark, Sr., was serving as Military Governor of the rural district (*Landkreis*) of Kemnath in Bavaria, near the Czechoslovakian border. In order to be selected for a surprise present, families had to have at least one child under the age of six. Betsy met that stipulation for the family, and our mother, Marie, accepted the challenge of flying into unsettled war-torn Europe in spite of grandparents’ concerns and objections. The *New York Times* ran a front page photo of Betsy boarding our assigned Pan Am four-engine Constellation, one of the three attempting the Merry Christmas surprise for “our brave soldiers who sacrificed to overcome the Nazi forces.”

Little did we realize the many surprises that lay ahead for us on that trip or as “embedded U.S. communities” intended to serve as living examples of American democracy, culture, and values. Our only heads-up preparation came at Camp Kilmer when we were shown films of the bombed-out towns and received briefings on what was expected of us as military dependents abroad. Getting there and living there left indelible imprints that influenced future life choices.

Three planes left New York LaGuardia on December 24; one landed in Frankfurt on New

Year’s Day. The first leg of the flight was to Gander, Newfoundland, to refuel. One plane slid off the icy runway and was disabled. Two left for Shannon, Ireland. During the night, the plane carrying our family had engine problems. One of the four



Little Elizabeth O’Rourke of Morristown boards plane in England bound for Frankfurt, Germany, to join her soldier father. Trip from New York was delayed by weather and Elizabeth wasn’t able to see her father Christmas Day.

– photo scanned from newspaper clipping cut from an issue of the *New York Times*

engines flamed brightly and caused great alarm among the mothers aboard, most with infants in their arms. There were no stewardesses provided with the pilots and planes, so, Marie, the oldest of the mothers, and I, the oldest dependent child, walked the aisle singing Christmas carols and helping to hold the crying babies. Shortly, a second engine flamed, on the other wing. The pilot announced that the plane had crossed the point on the Atlantic considered "the point of no return" and that the flight would continue on to Shannon airport.

Our plane landed at Shannon safely. The second plane did not and could not continue. We never knew what finally happened with the other two planes, but our plane continued on to Heathrow in London, England, in time for a week of fog so dense that you could not see across the street. The dependents were shuttled by bus daily from the airport to hotels that offered free overnight lodging for the stranded Christmas-present families. Our first night was in a very upscale hotel where waiters whispered loudly during the elegant dinner in the formal dining room that *even in our class, children are not permitted in the dining room*. Fellow guests at the holiday celebration were nevertheless generous in sharing their party hats and balloons with stranded American waifs.

Each night the hotels offering lodging became less elegant and the travel group was often split up and taken to several different hotels. One night, luggage left in the hotel lobby by mothers whose arms were full with infants and diaper bags was loaded on a truck never to be seen again. The next night, our family and one other were dropped off at a run-down hotel on the Thames River. By then it was New Year's Eve and there was a lively party underway in the hotel pub. Several of the more rowdy men noted the two attractive unescorted women and decided that they needed to pound on the room doors insisting the women join the party. The alarmed mothers moved both families into one bedroom and we pushed the beds up against the rickety doors.

Next morning at Heathrow, our mother gathered all the mothers together and said it was time to make an end to this increasingly miserable experience. She organized what may be one of the earliest sit-ins. The American mothers lined up their remaining luggage down the central aisle of the airport, and the families sat on their luggage while Mother demanded they see and speak with the American ambassador.

The ambassador came, heard the story of the Christmas-surprise flights, and we were on a plane flying to Frankfurt within an hour. The short flight to Germany ended with an extended wait at the Frankfurt airport while authorities located Dad, who was on his way with his car and driver to Amsterdam, where the Red Cross had asked him to pick us up. He was able to get back to rescue us from the airport for one of the coldest automobile rides I can remember.

We drove off to the Czechoslovakian border district, where he set up a protected enclave home behind high concrete walls guarded 24-7 by Polish soldiers. [To be continued]

– from *NAA Trichter*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 2006), 17, 21.



# RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE EARLY YEARS by Ann Marie O’Roark, ’51

## Part II

### Culture Shock: Hitler’s Ghost Haunts Rural Community

Violence in Iraq after Gulf War II brings flashbacks of hostile acts and deadly attacks in Germany that first year after the end of WWII. Apparently, very few citizens on the losing side of armed combat, whatever the war, are happy to have foreigners occupying and overseeing their land.



**Left: Ann Marie presiding over the NHS Student Council – yearbook photo. Right: Ann Marie today. At the time of this posting, Ms. O’Roark was serving as president of the International Council of Psychologists. –Archivist**



Our time in Kemnath, the government center for a district on the far eastern border of Deutschland, adjacent to the Czechoslovakian border, illustrates this human reaction pattern in poignant clarity.

The week before the dependent quotient of our family group arrived in Germany on a frosty-cold January day in 1947, our father had moved into the house on the eastern hill overlooking Kemnath where he was assigned to restore orderly government. As a specially trained military governor he, along with three or four military personnel, was in the process of conducting war crimes trials of local Nazi Party members and putting in place the infrastructure for democratic government and community services. He had been living in an apartment space near the governor’s offices with the rest of the military governance personnel.

Without established military bases and family housing, the military governors were authorized to establish homes in residences of former Nazi leaders. Decades later my brother, Dulaney O’Roark, who became a JAG Brigadier General, wrote the repatriation regulations for returning those residences and properties confiscated in the “early years” for use by the occupation forces, USAEUR [United States Army European Command].

Christmas week 1946, Mother, my brother, my sister, and I were spending fogbound days being bussed back and forth from the airport to various hotels in London. We were glad we had not been flying on one of the two planes that had crashed en route. Our trio of Pan Am four-engine Constellations set off from New York City

with great media fanfare and military parade drumrolls, and short hours later we were becoming increasingly apprehensive about what the future might hold in store for us who had not crashed and were heading into defeated enemy territories.

#### HAZARDS OF BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO GERMANY

Dad was learning first hand about the hazards of bringing democracy to Germany, not only in his unique tour of duty as a military governor assigned to restore civilian order and governance, but also as it was to become manifest by bringing American families to live in communities throughout the American zone of occupation. Some were going to military bases, not much different from those built in the United States. Others of us were going to outlying rural areas where a small group of U.S. military personnel were housed in homes and buildings evacuated by the Nazi leaders in that community.

Dad began staying overnight at the selected home base a week before we were scheduled to arrive in Germany. The three story, square country manor had thick external walls plastered grey-white with a red roof and a thicker two story wall around the whole yard. The hilltop retreat looks down over the village of Kemnath (I am confident that construction is still standing today). The austere and geometric fortress had served as the residence of a physician who was an active Nazi participant in well known and infamous experiments as well as the eugenic selections for exterminations.

One of Dad’s first overnights in our cavernous,

walled-and-gated home of the Herr Doktor, and before he arranged to post Polish military guards at the gate, he heard scraping noises outside his bedroom window. He pushed the pillows up high on the back headboard and slid himself down flat toward the foot of the bed. A few minutes later, automatic gun fire cut the pillows in two and left a jagged bullet hole pattern across the bedroom wall.

We never lived in that house, or any house in those early years, that did not have armed Polish protectors.

### **ABE, THE O'ROARK'S GERMAN SHEPHERD**

As soon as Dad learned Mother had accepted the Army's offer to locate the family with him for this assignment, he went around the district talking with farmers and tradesmen and looking for a German shepherd puppy that was born with a white fur coat. Hitler had decreed only dark brown and black shepherd dogs acceptable to be trained as Nazi attack canines. White shepherd dogs were selected to be eradicated as inferior, not acceptable to represent and protect the master race Hitler strove to create. When Dad found the white shepherd born to a poor farmer in the Kemnath *Landkreis*, Dad exchanged food and clothing for the puppy, who was then trained to guard and defend-to-the-death my brother, sister, and me.

This special guardian pet was named Abe, A for Ann, B for Bud, and E for Elizabeth (Betsy). It also, and not accidentally, was a widely recognized name of U.S. president and Civil War hero Abraham Lincoln. We did not leave the walls of our Kemnath home base without Abe at our sides.

The outcome of Abe's highly visible, devoted, and valiant relationship with our family was unavoidable and deeply regretted. When that first tour of duty ended, we were shipped stateside, but Army regulations would not permit Abe to come with us. Abe was considered an attack weapon, too dangerous to live in civilian society. The consequence of following that regulation was reported to Dad by Hans, our German language translator and a daily family companion. Hans had gained Abe's trust, and he also had great appreciation and affection for our family pet and guardian.

Hans was a bright youth Dad had hired because he understood English well, would be an honest interpreter, and could be a youthful companion-ally for three children isolated from school friends. He was a poster-perfect German lad who was never part of the Hitler Youth Movement, though his father died in a Nazi uniform. Hans is the one who notified Dad that Abe had died. Dad did not tell the three of us until we were adults how Abe refused to eat after we left him to come back to the States. Abe simply lay down and starved to death.

When weather and roads permitted we three children were driven by a kindly German man named Bruno, who dressed in heavy dark green, semi-Bavarian style woolens, up and over a formidable mountain to Grafenwöhr to go to school. The large military base there had begun as a one-room school for dependent children in the elementary grades. There were perhaps 20 of us with one teacher. Heavy snows and dangerous driving conditions meant that we were homebound most days. Mother set up her own school room for us and ordered basic books for our grades from the States. She began tutoring us.

Mother did not need to tend to the large house as Dad brought in local residents to provide routine daily assistance. Our household was maintained by at least five persons from the community, cooks, cleaners, laundry tenders, yard workers, and repair specialists. Mother's supervisory time was minimal, especially with the language barrier that was gradually and only partially overcome. These were people who had not been active in the Nazi party and who had families in need of foodstuffs and other supplies unavailable in the local markets.

### **THE RETURN OF HITLER'S GHOST**

Many residents of the small rural community wore rags wrapped around their feet for shoes even in the midst of winter. This did not deter them from gathering in the favorite *Gasthaus* for an

evening liter of the locally brewed heavy beer. That is where a rumor about the return of Hitler's ghost began.

One cold morning the streets filled with wagons loaded with household belongings pulled by cows or an occasional horse or mule. Other assorted farm animals were herded by the sturdy country folk who began evacuating Kemnath. When questioned about why they were leaving, frightened villagers mumbled responses about Hitler's ghost coming to punish them for not fighting harder and longer for the fatherland.

A lifelong Kemnath resident who held a clerical position in the district government explained that one of the guards who tended the railroad crossing gates at the southern edge of town was telling everyone who came to the favorite local eating and gathering *Bierhaus* that Hitler's ghost had attacked him.

He claimed the great gashes along his cheeks, neck, and arm were caused by the ghost's hook arm. Hitler's ghost threatened to haunt all who had failed to protect the fatherland and master race.

As military governor of the district, it was Dad's challenge to assure smooth functioning of bureaucratic and administrative routines, as well as to conduct trials for war crimes committed by local Nazi leaders and any postwar criminal or civil misconduct. He was responsible to calm regional disruptions or uprisings among citizens and displaced transients. His responsibility included quelling mass hysteria and panic exodus behaviors. But since the availability of troop support or armored tanks and vehicles from the nearest U.S. military base in Grafenwöhr was across the steep Bavarian mountain mantled deep with heavy winter snows, this "Hitler's Ghost" situation required a Huckleberry Finn-type solution.

This was one of dad's special talents. He was able to stabilize the community before day's end without leaving his headquarters office. He dispatched a staff member, the court translator and highly respected community resident, with instructions to go to the gathering place where the railroad gatekeeper was enjoying free lagers of the local hops brew and ask him to tell his tale again about how Hitler's ghost with a hook hand attacked him in his crossing-guard shelter.

The final instruction to the venerable *Stadtbürger* was to wait patiently while the gatekeeper elaborated on the vicious attack by the vengeful specter. At the conclusion of the horror story, the community elder was to begin slapping his leg and laughing heartily. After a lengthy laugh, he was to loudly ask the wounded patriot, "Now, tell us all, just why it is that you took that woman into your gatehouse in the first place?"

– from NAA *Trichter*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2008), 22-24.





NAA

# Trichter



**Der Nürnberger Trichter, sicher und schnell, macht die Köpfe hell!**  
**The NAA Funnel reliably and quickly makes one brighter.**

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*50's faculty member went on to fame*

## Warren Robbins, dead at 85

Stories in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times* announced the death at age 85 of former NHS social science teacher Warren Robbins Dec. 4, 2008. He taught at Nürnberg in 1950-51 and delivered the commencement address for the Class of 1951 from the steps of Stein Castle when Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower had to cancel.

He is perhaps best remembered by Ann Marie O'Roark, 1951 valedictorian, who knew him as her teacher and, later in life, as a colleague-friend. She says he inspired her poetry writing long ago and her conceptual thinking.

Robbins is best known nationally as the founder and director emeritus of Washington's Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and director of the Center for Cross-Cultural Communication.

Born in 1923, the youngest of 11 children of Ukranian Jewish immigrants, Robbins came to NHS shortly after completing a master's degree in history from the

University of Michigan in 1949.

After his stint at NHS he became a cultural affairs officer with the U.S. Information Agency. He was traveling as a

cultural attache with former Sen. S.I. Hayakawa (R-Calif.) when he strolled into a Hamburg antique shop one day and a collection of African sculptures caught his eye. He bought 32 pieces.

Six years later and back in the U.S., Robbins' collection of African art had filled up his basement. Seeing that the Washington home of Frederick Douglas, the 19th-century abolitionist, was on the market, he took out a big mortgage and established his Museum of African Art.

With little money, Robbins built his museum by the force of his personality and his passion for cross-cultural understanding. Word was, "There was a crazy guy with an African art collection who had never been to Africa." Later Robbins did actually spend time in Africa and became an expert in African art and artifacts.

Initially, there was resistance to a white man establishing and organizing a museum of African art, but Robbins had a ready answer: "I make no apologies for being white. You don't have to be Chinese to appreciate ancient ceramics, and you don't have to be a fish to be an ichthyologist."

In the mid 1970s, concerned about the permanence of his collection, Robbins lobbied Congress to get The Smithsonian to take over the museum. In 1987, the museum was moved to the National Mall and renamed the National

Museum of African Art.

When Dr. O'Roark began making annual trips to Washington D.C. for work with the American Psychological Association, whose headquarters are only a few blocks from the Robbins Cross-Cultural Center, she renewed contact with her former teacher. They met regularly to discuss compilation of some of Robbins' writings and development of a library room at Georgetown University.

In 1990 Robbins was still going strong, presenting a lecture at the Institute of General Semantics entitled "No Dinosaurs on the Ark." In it he returned to themes which he first introduced to his students at Nürnberg American High School.



*Yearbook photo*



*Robbins in later life*

Robbins' letter to his students - p. 15  
More on Robbins - p. 17

# Text of Warren Robbins' Letter to the 1951 NHS Seniors

According to a story in an issue of "The Army Brat," Warren Robbins taught social science at NHS only in the fall of 1950. He went to work for the U.S. Information Agency at the beginning of 1951, but returned in June to deliver the commencement address to the Class of 1951. The address, which Ralph Lurvey, '51, remembered as entitled "Are You 16 Years Old or 16,000?" has not survived, but in a personal letter to Lurvey (May 19, 1994), Robbins said he was "still riding the same intellectual hobby horse," and mentioned his recent commencement address to the Art School of the University of Michigan entitled "Are You 21 or 21,000 Years Old?"

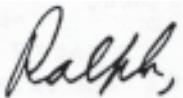
Ideas from that speech were presented in an article in the University of New Hampshire alumni magazine (no date):

*Using 21,000 as an arbitrary estimate of recorded history, he emphasizes that "the human being is a function ... of culture at whatever point in its cumulative process that one is born into it. The later you are born in the ... evolution of culture, the more information ... you have at your intellectual disposal to assimilate and integrate, leading toward the kind of wisdom for your particular age."*

*... So, how old are you? Do you measure your age in biological years, or are you plumbing the wisdom of the past 21,000 years?"*

In addition to his commencement address, Robbins sent a letter to each one of the 22 NHS graduating seniors from his USIF work station in Bad Nauheim, Germany, dated June 6, 1951. The letter addressed to Ralph Lurvey has survived and is printed below along with Robbins' attached reading list. – Archivist

Dear



I hope you will look over this talk again in a few years, at which time the implications of some of the things I have said will be more apparent to you.

I'm including a little list of books that have influenced me. They are all by well known and authoritative writers and teachers. Most any one of them will give you some fundamentally new ideas and will help you to continue to grow all your lives — "to live in the stream of human tradition." There is no reason why your learning and development should stop just because you happen to finish school. Yet this is often the case.

It's interesting: It's just ten years almost to the day that I graduated from high school. I'm twenty seven. These ten years have been very exciting and fast moving ones for me because I made up my mind in 1941 to keep developing. As I have grown, "my world" has grown with me, and it's a much richer place than I thought it was then. The people in it have more "on the ball" than we sometimes think, or that they themselves often realize.

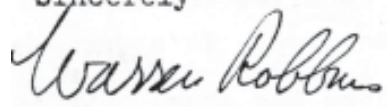
Don't sell yourselves short. And don't give up your faith in yourselves and in man. You have a long way to go but you can enjoy every minute of your lives — paradoxically, even the unhappy times — if you develop perspective about what living means, what it requires of us, and what we can expect of it.

And don't get discouraged with yourself. There isn't one among you who doesn't have something to offer — though it may be expressed in different ways and to different extents. Very often a "C" student, for example, is merely a fellow who doesn't happen to like the way schools in general are set up, and who therefore finds it difficult to get in line and adjust to formal classroom education. He may have a better understanding in general (he may) though it doesn't come out so easily, than the person who gets all "A's" by just repeating what the teacher or the book says. When he learns to organize himself a little better, he will have more to contribute and more to gain.

If you ever feel like "talking over" any of these ideas, don't hesitate to drop me a line. If I'm unable to answer

immediately don't think its lack of interest. I'll get to it when the time allows.

My very best to you. I've enjoyed knowing you very much. And thanks again for asking me to come back in this way for your graduation.

Sincerely  


#### A LIST OF BOOKS TO LOOK INTO

Cowley, Malcom – <i>Books that Have Changed Our Minds</i>	Barnett, Lincoln – <i>The Universe and Dr. Einstein</i>
Robinson, James Harvey – <i>The Mind in the Making</i>	Siegfried, Andre – <i>America Comes of Age</i>
Hayakawa, S. I. – <i>Language in Thought and Action</i>	Steffens, Lincoln – <i>The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens</i>
Korzybski, Alfred – <i>The Manhood of Humanity</i>	Maurois, Andre – <i>Disraeli</i>
Otto, Max – <i>Science and the Moral Life</i>	Frank, Phillip – <i>Relativity, a Richer Truth</i>
Chase, Stuart – <i>The Tyranny of Words</i>	Barzun, Jacques – <i>On Human Freedom</i>
Lee, Irving – <i>Language Habits in Human Affairs</i>	Lynd, Robert S. – <i>Knowledge for What</i>
Huxley, Julian – <i>Man in the Modern World</i>	Wylie, Philip – <i>Generation of Vipers</i>
Kluckhohn, Clyde – <i>Mirror for Man</i>	Kelly, Earl C. – <i>Education for What Is Real</i>
Ferguson, Harvey – <i>Modern Man</i>	Joyce, James – <i>Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>
Boas, Franz – <i>The Mind of Primitive Man</i>	Butler, Samuel – <i>The Way of All Flesh</i>
Benedict, Ruth – <i>Patterns of Culture</i>	Dorsey, George – <i>Man's Own Show</i>
White, Leslie – <i>Essays on Science and Culture</i>	Barnes, Harry – <i>The History of Western Civilization</i>
Sumner, William – <i>Folkways</i>	Scheinfeld, Aram – <i>You and Heredity</i>

Some important prophets of modern times: George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, D.H. Lawrence, John Dewey, Henry James.

NOTE: Some of the books on this list may be tough reading for you right now. But they are important books to give you an up-to-date understanding of the world (the latest generation). If one is too difficult, put it away and try again in a couple of years. In the meantime, read about the book: the libraries are full of books about important books — reviews and explanations. And what you may not understand at first, often clears up on a subsequent reading

Don't ever let anyone tell you what you should and should not read. That's "totalitarianism of the mind." Keep your mind free and open. No book is harmful if you read maturely and remember that words are only words. And no book is obscene, if you are not obscene. Obscenity is something that exists in the minds of people, not the words themselves. Some books may be cheap and a waste of time, but you can learn to decide that for yourself. Good Reading!





# NHS Trichter



"der Nürnberger Trichter, sicher und schnell, macht die Köpfe hell!"

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## POWs in Regensburg

by James (Ted) Wilson, ('51)

Ted Wilson attended NHS during his freshman and sophomore years (1947-48 and 1948-49). His story tells of his experiences before he came to NHS. – Ed.

It was late June, 1946, and the last of the German POWs held on U.S. soil were leaving Fort Hamilton, NY, for Bremerhaven, Germany. At least that's what they thought. This last group was to be stopped for a year and a half in England to work before they were finally released to go home. Nearby in the U.S. Army dependent housing, the second shipload of families were preparing to sail to Europe to rejoin their U.S. Army fathers. Three of us, Mom, my sister, and I, were bound for Bremerhaven, Germany, on the Army transport ship, *President Tyler*, to join our father in Regensburg. We arrived in Bremerhaven via South Hampton on July 11, 1946, after a 14-day uneventful voyage. Uneventful??—that means I didn't get seasick.

After disembarking, we took the overnight train to Munich.

When we arrived, I was amazed to see that the *Bahnhof* was almost completely destroyed: no roof, rubble piled high near the tracks, and railroad cars still lying around the yard. At age 13, I was so intrigued with the bomb damage in the *Bahnhof* that Mom had to come back and take me off the train. Major Dad was waiting for us and since we hadn't seen him for about two years, it was an emotional reunion for Mom; I was more interested in the *Bahnhof*. Outside the station, Munich was a mess: crumpled, jagged buildings, drab-looking people, no cars, desolation all around.

Regensburg, our final destination, was a two-

hour ride in the army command car that took us out of Munich on the Ringstrasse, passing the ever-present rubble to Odeonsplatz, then up Ludwigstrasse and Leopoldstrasse toward Landshut and Regensburg. The streets were devoid of any traffic except for pedestrians pushing their ubiquitous handcarts. There were piles of bricks in all the streets, but neat piles; someone had been busy cleaning up.



Bombed out Frauenkirche in Munich

When we arrived at our house, built into the old Regensburg city wall on Wiesmeierweg, I saw a sign on the front door that said "DEFC 22 Officers Quarters." Dad explained that we were taking over the house from the POW camp officers who had moved out to make room for us. I asked what the initials meant and was informed "Defeated Enemy Forces Camp 22." Dad was the

commandant of the POW camp located on the outskirts of Regensburg. The last time I had seen my dad, he had been Field Artillery, but that had



POW camp guard tower and fence

been in 1942. Wow! I hadn't known that there were any German POWs left then, except for Goering and other Nazis at the Nürnberg Trials.

Dad then announced that, as the commissary was not open, we would have to eat our meals at the POW camp for the next few weeks. Wow! Things were really looking more exciting.

Maybe this would make up for the fact that I had been uprooted from my friends in Columbus, OH, and transported all the way over here (and for

what?). That evening, when we arrived at the camp officers mess, there was an orchestra playing, plus waiters in white coats carrying cocktails and trays of food. The orchestra leader promptly came up to my mother and asked in broken English what song would she like to hear; "Blue Danube Waltz" was her reply. So from then on, whenever we entered the officers mess, the orchestra would stop what they were playing, and strike up the "Blue Danube Waltz."

Another advantage that my sister and I enjoyed was that we had a command car for transportation with Pvt. Shultz as chauffeur. Shultz loved to drive fast since there wasn't any traffic in town. We encouraged him (when Mom and Dad were not with us). I think our record was 41 mph, quite daring, we thought, for the narrow streets of Regensburg.

After a while trips to the camp were routine and we became acquainted with Lt. Cosgrove, the provost marshal. He loved to hunt in the forest nearby and we were amazed to see all the deer antlers on his office wall. "The little deer were called roebuck and were about the size of a goat. The hunting was done in the *Tiergarten*, (Thurn and

Taxis). My sister fell in love with the German shepherd dog that the HQ officers had adopted. He was always in the office when we visited and it was obvious that he had seen hard times during the war. Other events that we enjoyed that summer were the mornings after the Polish guards raided the camp for knives, weapons, etc. The "loot" was always in Dad's office and we could help ourselves as long as it wasn't a gun or a *Panzerfaust* (bazooka).

The camp had a print shop where the POWs made me a stamp album, after they heard that I collected stamps. I still treasure that old book and have filled in most of the German stamps from 1871 through 1945, except for the really expensive ones. Other items that were made in camp were ashtrays from old brass shells (they concocted a P-38 airplane on one that I still have), and ski boots for my sister and me, which we used that winter at the *Wasserkuppe* near Fulda.

Our house was a three-story duplex and it was populated next door by about 15 Polish guards. They looked very soldierly, dressed in black, with white helmets and belts. Sis and I were regular visitors at their half of the house that summer, since there

were no other American kids in town. I can still remember being around when they were fixing dinner. They had a big jar of bacon grease which they spread on some of the blackest bread I had ever seen. Since I was the one who gave away my butter ration during the war (because I couldn't stand the greasy stuff), I prayed that they wouldn't ask us to stay for dinner. They didn't (thank goodness) and Sis and I left to have our dinner at home.

Dad had a large Persian rug in his office; one day the inspector general came to the camp and remarked, "Fred, that sure is a handsome rug you have in your office." So Dad, after the general had left, sent the rug out to be cleaned, and then had it delivered to

our quarters at *Wiesmeierweg* for safe keeping.

We toured the prosthesis factory at the camp and saw the artificial arms and legs being made for some of the less fortunate POWs. The men were also growing vegetables in their own gardens; it was a city within a city. The name of the camp was changed to "Civilian Internment Enclosure" (CIE 22) before we left at Christmas time for Fulda and the 5th Field Artillery Headquarters. Dad was



**POW Camp at Regensburg**

again the POW camp commander when we moved to Munich in May, 1947. He presided over the Dachau camp, releasing the last of the POWs there. That summer following my graduation from the 8th grade at Munich, a friend and I visited Dachau frequently to tour the camp museum and attend trials there. The one I remember most vividly was the trial of Elsie Koch, better known as "the lampshade lady of Buchenwald." She was the Buchenwald commandant's wife who selected tattooed prisoners to be made into lampshades after their death (a grizzly thought, to say the least). The trial prosecutor, a slow-talking Texan, was having trouble eliciting sympathy for his side because Elsie Koch was about eight months pregnant.

Many years later, when I visited Naaberg, near Regensburg, and went to a tin factory, I fell into conversation with an ex-POW who had been in my dad's camp in Regensburg. He volunteered the opinion that the camp was well stocked with food and maybe that the prolonged captivity wasn't so bad after all during that period, since the German civilians on the outside were getting only 1500 calories a day.

# COMMENCEMENT



## NURNBERG AMERICAN SCHOOL

Nurnberg - Germany

STEIN CASTLE

JUNE 7, 1951, 7:P. M.

Processional	Mr. William B. Starbird
"Star Spangled Banner"	Audience
Invocation	Chaplain T. R. Olsen
Introduction of Speaker	Mr. Carl A. Parker
Commencement Address	Mr. Warren M. Robbins
Vocal Ensemble	"Where ere you walk"
Presentation of Class	Mr. John E. Charlson
Presentation of Diplomas	Brig. Gen. Ernest A. Bixby
"America"	Audience
Recessional	Mr. William B. Starbird

# CLASS of 1951

Alexander, Reita M.	Pittsfield, Maine
Bragan, Ann Cale	Washington, D. C.
Caldwell, Stanley W.	Junction City, Kansas
Eckert, William N.	Washington, D. C.
Fowler, Betty Sue	Birmingham, Alabama
Gross, Robert J.	Minneapolis, Minnesota
Hejno, Elizabeth M.	Washington, D. C.
Hitselsberger, Charles Henry	Washington, D. C.
Jordan, Helen	Weston, West Virginia
Lewark, Stanley	Newark, N. J.
Lurvey, Ralph A. Jr.	Keene, N. H.
Lysaught, Beverly Ann	Savannah, Georgia
McCarthy, Patsy	El Paso, Texas
*O'Roark, Ann M.	Williamsburg, Kentucky
Partin, John C.	El Paso, Texas
Paul, Peter	Yonkers, N. Y.
Philbrick, Roberta Anne	Portland, Maine
Phillips, John S.	Ames, Iowa
Russell, Diane	Salt Lake City, Utah
Savident, James H.	San Mateo, California
†Surratt, Jacqueline	Red Bay, Alabama
Valimaki, Ronald	Fitchburg, Mass.

\*Valedictorian †Salutatorian

## THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
 What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?  
 Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous  
 [fight,  
 O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming;  
 And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
 Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:  
 O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

## AMERICA

My Country, 'tis of thee,  
 Sweet Land of Liberty,  
 Of thee I sing;  
 Land where my fathers died,  
 Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
 From every Mountain-side  
 Let Freedom ring.  
 Our fathers' God, to Thee,  
 Author of Liberty,  
 To Thee we sing:  
 Long may our land be bright  
 With Freedom's holy light;  
 Protect us by Thy might,  
 Great God, our King.





## 22 Graduate in Class of 1951

Row 1: Helen Jordan, Ann Marie O’Roark, Beverly Lysaught, Roberta Philbrick, Patsy McCarthy

Row 2: Elizabeth Hejno, Reita Alexander, Diane Russell, Ann Bragan?, Jacqueline Surratt?, Betty Fowler

Row 3: Bill Eckert, Phil Harrison, Jim Savident, Stanley Lewark, Charles Hitselberger, Ralph “Pete” Lurvey,  
Bob Gross, Peter Paul, Ron Valimaki

Not pictured: Stanley Caldwell, John Partin, John “Jack” Phillips

These yearbook seniors did not graduate with this class: Beth Bandt (transferred out), Floyd Brown, Bernice Hearn, Jessie Redman.

– Picture from Connie (Porter) Johnson, ’53. Identifications by Johnson, Lurvey, and Bill Murphy, 50.