Tribute to Anita Mallinckrodt 11-29-1929 to 1-7-2019 memorial 2-9-19 by Cathie Schoppenhorst

A few months ago Anita told me she wanted “Sie hat sich auch bemueht” written on her tombstone. – she also tried hard. Anita has been an important part of my life for many years, and tried to mentor me to publish my research. In a way I feel like I was a disappointment to her, because while I present a lot of historical programs, I did not put them in a form so she could edit them for publication. She also wanted me to understand German better, so I could do my own translations. She felt that researchers needed to judge a writer’s original meaning, rather than the translator’s interpretation. Anita mentored other writers, and hosted the Missouri Research Roundtable in her home; several monographs came out of that group.

I have spent a lot of time with Anita, transporting her to appointments, attending her presentations, and sharing meals with her. Sometimes we would discuss programs we heard on NPR or PBS. She would try to get me to see the bigger picture on anything we discussed. I recently ran across an article on the Missouri River written in 1907 that I wished I could have shared with her. She would have been astonished to learn that someone in India recently reprinted the Mallinckrodt seed catalog of 1897! I can’t remember how we met, although she probably could have reminded me if I had asked. I do remember that soon after I started helping Ralph Gregory sell books for the local historical societies at Deutsch Country Days, I offered to add Anita’s booklets on German immigration to our table. They were quite popular there, especially *Why They Left* and *How They Came*.

Anita tried to make good use of her degrees, Journalism, International Communications and Political Science, which seemed to complement each other. Her doctoral dissertation was “Propaganda Behind the Wall; a case study in the use of propaganda as a tool in foreign policy by Communist governments.” She wrote several books in German about issues such as mass media and foreign policy in the German Democratic Republic, or East Germany. One title translated: The Environmental Dialogue in the GDR: Literature, Church, Party and Interest Groups in their Socio-Political Context. Anita understood world politics, and feared the repetition of mistakes by those who were not familiar with history. She stood up for what she believed, and participated in Civil Rights marches in the 60s.

Anita tried to preserve the history of her ancestors, not just their genealogies, but tell what they experienced, what they thought, and how they reacted to what was going on in their communities and in the world. The story of how the building housing the Mallinckrodt archives collapsed, and their request for copies of her research, really demonstrates how important her research was. In recent years, in conjunction with her brother, she began recording some of the stories of her childhood. One anecdote explained her preference of Coke to Pepsi, because Coca-Cola brought drinks and souvenirs to her school once or twice a year. Anita was less interested in precise relationships, although her extended family of cousins was important to her. Recently she made a point of calling Ellen, her brother’s wife, sister. She was particularly fond of the family members who called her occasionally, sent her letters or at least a note on a Christmas card, and visited when they were in the area. She really valued hand-written notes, but also looked forward to typed round robin letters.

Anita particularly liked taking her guests to Ashley’s Rose, and she would call Paul in advance so he could have her favorite liver and onions available. One time she split a rack of ribs with my husband. While she appreciated when people brought food to her, she liked it even better if they would sit down and share a meal with her. She loved fish, and enjoyed making the rounds of the area fish fries during Lent. She really liked one of the Chinese buffets in Washington, because they had fish. Just 4 days before she died, I took her there and she ate heartily of salmon, spinach casserole and several of the Chinese entrees. When I took her to St. Charles she always wanted to go to the Country Buffet or Golden Corral. She generally ate two plates full of food, which included a variety of vegetables, then ice cream and cobbler for dessert, and pocketed some cookies to take home. For a tiny person, Anita really enjoyed eating!

Anita tried to share her research through frequent public-speaking. Besides creating presentations for the local historical societies, she also spoke in the Franklin County Local History series at East Central College, and to groups of Katy Trail bikers participating in the Road Scholar program. She was very organized, but some of her organizational techniques were surprising. She loved sticky notes! She kept lists on her counter so that when someone called, she would remember what she wanted to tell them.

Anita did not always approve of what some would term progress. She refused to communicate by email, and while she had a computer, she preferred going to the library to do research. She did not like it when the meaning of words or styles of writing evolved. What she learned in Journalism school at Mizzou in the 40s was the only correct way. She would become quite angry when she heard words such as abolitionist and utopian misused. She was adamant that while most of the German immigrants were anti-slavery, and supported the Union during the Civil War, they were not necessarily abolitionists. She tried to counter the suggestion that the members of the Giessen Society were Utopians by organizing a group of us to speak at the Missouri History Museum and then editing those presentations in the book *The Historic 1830s German Immigration to Missouri.* That is when we created “Footnoted Legacies” to have a different imprint than her Mallinckrodt Communications and Research. She wanted it to be clear that our source material was included so that the subject matter could be verified.

Each time Anita wrote a book in the last few years she would term it her Swan song. As a survivor of cancer and living with heart disease, she recognized the end could come at any time. Still she couldn’t retire from journalism, and recently edited Bob Schultz’s latest book. She also had an idea for a new project, and was looking for a word processor to use at Victorian Manor. Just 4 days before she died, she showed me a manual typewriter she had borrowed to start the project.

In conclusion, I want to editorialize on behalf of Anita. The preservation of this building and having the Augusta museum open regularly were very important to Anita, so I hope many of the residents as well as area businesses will step up and make it happen in Anita’s memory. Anita was honored to be the Augusta Town Historian, and while it would be difficult to match her prolific writing, she would definitely want someone to continue uncovering the stories of this community, research the backstories, and publish them. While Anita did not write the nomination for the Augusta Historic District placement on the National Register of Historic Places, Anita’s research was quoted in the nomination. She would be pleased if her research continues to be used as long as it is properly footnoted. Anita attended two planning meetings for the Missouri Humanities Council’s German Heritage Corridor initiative. She was dismayed at how slow the planning process was, and suspected she wouldn’t see the project come to fruition. Augusta is an important part of the Corridor, and needs to continue to host activities that represent its German Heritage. Anita wanted the St. Charles County Historical Advisory board to resume. It was an opportunity for the historical organizations of the area to meet each other, share their plans and goals, and find ways they could help each other. Anita felt that type of collaboration was very important. Anita made an effort to have an impact on others. Her legacy lives on because of her extensive writing, through the students she taught and mentored, and the friendships she made throughout the world.