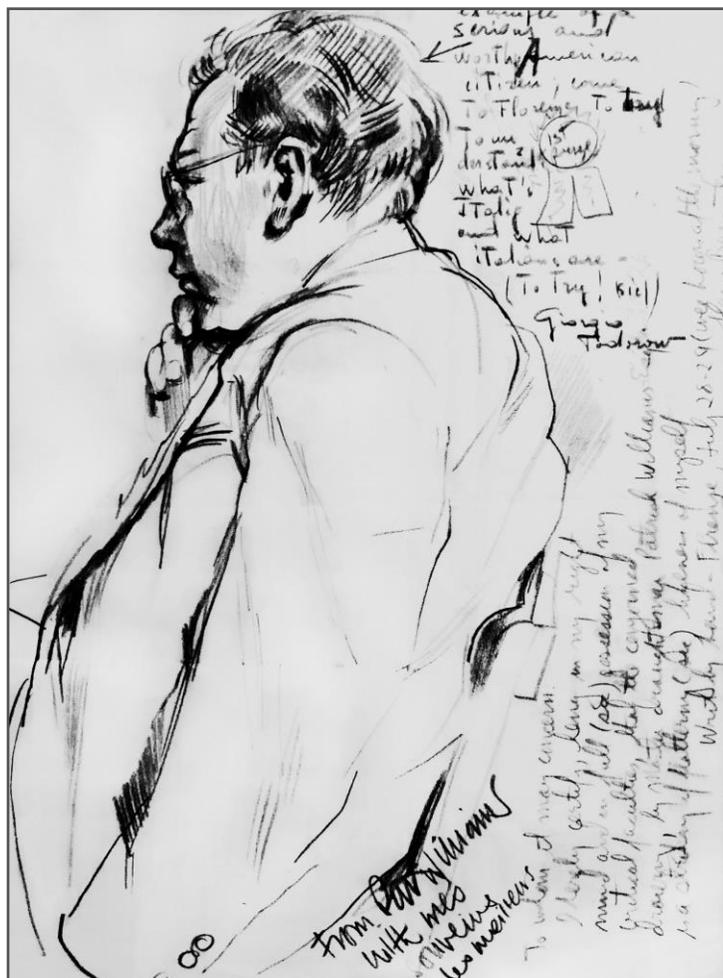


# Memorial Minute for Henry Traugott Bernstein

January 24 1929 — April 4 2020



Henry Traugott Bernstein was born on 24th January 1929 in Frankfurt, Germany. His mother, Clara Groedel, came from New Jersey, USA and his father, Eugene Bernstein, from Riga in Latvia.

In WW1 Eugene was drafted into the Russian Army Medical Service, and later posted to Germany where he met and married Clara, who was visiting family in Frankfurt. In 1929, Henry was born, followed by a sister Adrienne in 1931, who sadly died three months later.

In 1933, with the rise of Hitler, Eugene moved his family to New York. He reopened his dermatology practice near Central Park.

In 1937, when Henry was eight years old, his mother Clara developed breast cancer. Despite being one of the first patients to try radiation, she did not survive and died in 1938.

Henry attended Horace Mann School where his older cousin Mathilda was already a student. There were adventures at summer camps in Wyoming where Henry learned horse riding and developed his independence, free from the intense

summers of New York City and the sadness he felt over the loss of his mother.

In 1946, Henry left New York City to attend Stanford University, California, where he switched his major from chemistry to history. In 1950, he spent a year in graduate studies at Yale. Then, in 1952 he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue his PhD thesis in the introduction of science and technology in India. In 1954 he sailed to London and settled in Chelsea, cycling to and from the British Library writing his thesis. He eventually returned to Berkeley, California to complete his thesis. While in Berkeley he was active in the regional American Friends Service Committee.

In the late 1950s, Henry began a teaching career in Berkeley, teaching both history and science. In 1962 he travelled to England to observe schools and to volunteer with the International Voluntary Service. He met Wynne Smith in 1963, at the Quaker Meeting House in St Martin's Lane, London. Wynne was a journalist who had returned from eighteen months in Alaska as the Features Editor of *The Anchorage Times*. They were married in the same Friends Meeting House on 4th May 1963. Their family life began in Blackheath, London where their daughter Alexandra was born in December 1963. While in Blackheath Henry joined Southwark and Croydon Monthly Meeting in 1964. Ten years later, having moved closer to Tunbridge Wells he transferred his membership to West Kent. He was West Kent's Meeting Representative on Meeting for Sufferings from 1991 to 1997.

Henry taught history and science to trainee teachers at St Mary's College, Twickenham commuting on the train from East Sussex. He especially enjoyed family life in the countryside and he found great contentment in soaking up the peace and quiet around him.

For some fifteen years Henry and his family spent summers in a small house in the Pyrenees in the village of Castelnou. The French house was sold in 1987, and in its place a flat by the sea in Brighton was purchased, to help with Wynne's ongoing asthma.

Henry had taken early retirement from teaching in 1982 to devote time to writing. On 16th June, 1991, just as Alexandra completed her training and registered as an Architect, Wynne died unexpectedly, from an aneurysm. Henry sold the cottage in Hartfield, and went to Cambridge to pursue a course to become a guide in the art and architecture of the city. He also taught Italian Art History to adult learners at the University of the Third Age there.

In 1992, Alexandra married Thomas Immel in the Brighton Quaker Meeting House and they moved to Seattle, Washington. Henry started travelling three times a year to visit his daughter and her family. Grandson Henry Immel was born in 1995 and granddaughter Isabella Immel was born in 1997. In 2000, Henry moved to live permanently with Alexandra and the family, in a specially designed addition to the family home, created by his daughter.

Henry transferred his membership from West Kent Monthly Meeting to University Friends Meeting in August, 2001. Henry attended University Friends Meetings in Seattle for nearly twenty years every Sunday, serving for some of those years on the library committee. In the early days, he rode his electric bicycle, chatted with the neighbors, wrote letters to representatives in Congress and soaked up family life as a grandfather until his kidneys began to fail him in 2013 and he started dialysis. From then on, Henry was cared for at home as his health declined. Despite his declining health he still managed to attend University Friends Meeting with the help of an aide and Access van transportation until just a few months before his death. His home was filled with oil paintings he had made all over his travels in Europe, and the walls were lined with a selection of his books. Especially beautiful was his collection of catalogues from art exhibitions he had visited throughout Europe.

Henry died in his own home, of renal failure on 4th April, 2020, with Alexandra at his side. He will be remembered for his inquisitive mind, his incredible memory, his quick wit and sense of humor. Henry had a quiet magnetism which drew people into conversation with him, wherever he went. He was a peace maker in the truest sense of the word. He was able to, willing to and wanted to talk to anyone and everyone who crossed his path; he was one of those rare people who wanted to make a real connection with others.

Henry had wisdom, and a rare idealism, which meant he believed and hoped for solutions to conflict in the world. He never stopped imagining how things could be made better if we all worked together towards a peaceful outcome. His commitment to Quaker values and membership of the Society of Friends were very important to him. He believed that God was in every person, and in equality, pacifism, and a life lived simply. He is survived by Alexandra, Thomas and Henry and Bella.