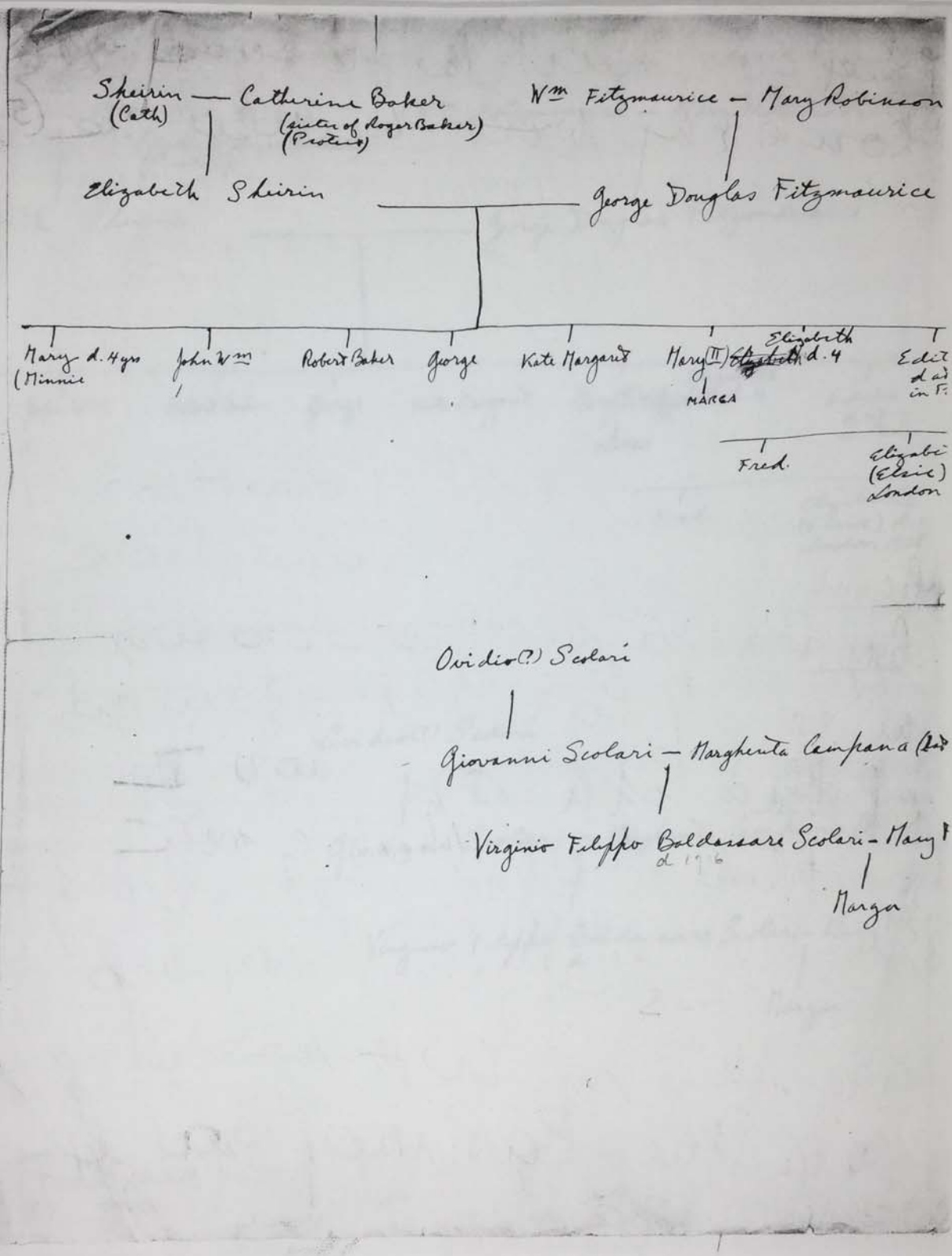

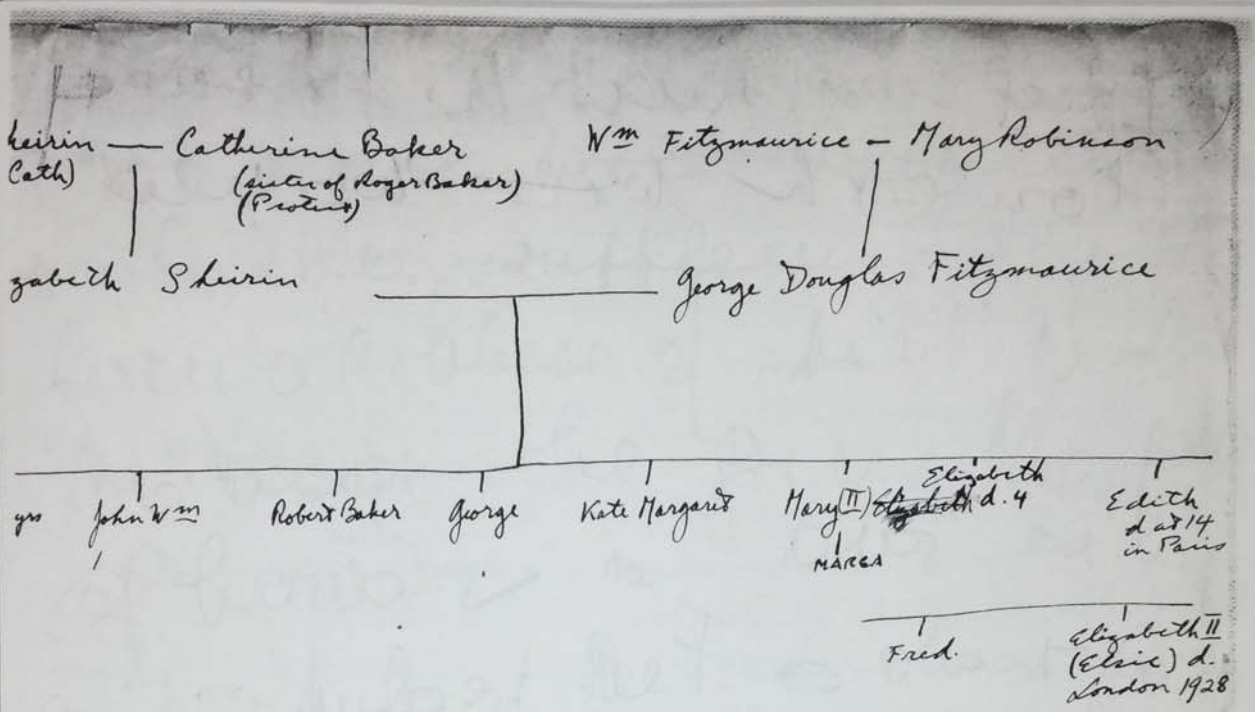

Ovidio(?) Scolari

Giovanni Scolari — Margherita Campana (2nd wife)

Virginio Filippo Baldassare Scolari — Mary Fitz.
d 1916

Marga

[transcribing: AHB per RR]

I feel sure that the group of
Florentine will ~~..~~ ... the
valuable supplem...
loan of these 2 pict which
would be given the place
of honor in our exh.
Informed that it is short for
the pict should leave Rome
by Sept 20. in order to arr
in N.Y. for the opening
of the Exh on Nov VI
I hope therefore that you will
expedite matters as rat
as poss - thus grant our req
the [illegible] of MA would
win the lasting grat of

[MSB remembrance. c. 1970s]

Box 8. f. 83

1

These fragments of poems and love letters remind me of how A. was when we first met. Extraordinary lyrical poetic mind. Extreme consciousness of nature. Feeling for sound. Love of music to the point of weeping once when Harriet Cohen played I know not which Bach prelude and Fugue at Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan's beautiful house in Astoria.

These David Newton notes seem to me veiled advances. It should be re - membered that Alfred was extremely handsome and knew all about homosexuality. However he was aloof, mysterious - he may well have aroused hopes - left persons in doubt - not troubled to make clear his feelings - His mind seemed always distant and rapt. Often he forgot to answer. When we became engaged Jinny Carpenter(who worked at the very beginning in the Museum in the Hecksher building at 730 Fifth Ave.) said: " It is very hard - you speak to him - you ask him a question and he does not answer".

When he taught at Vassar he was in some plays. There are photographs - in this he was Sir W. Raleigh. When I came to teach Italian at Vassar in Sept. 1925 he had left, but several of the students, most notably two seniors - Mary Cooper and Louise Tanner (Vassar '26) remembered him with yearning. I don't know whether they had ever spoken to him but they certainly were conscious of his poetic emanation; he had an abstract aura that was all the more interesting because unexpectely he'd come out with a witty remark (or a judgement) that made you see that he was right in focus. He had a marvellous sense of humor.

In this ~~envelope~~ envelope there are academic notes and grades. He went through Princeton with scholarships and cost his family as little as possible. His younger brother Andrew Barr proved more expensive.

ROTC. If A. graduated at 20 in 1922 he entered Princeton in 1918; there is a photograph of him in uniform. He detested the discipline. It cannot have lasted v. long but it left an indelible impression. At a certain moment during his Princeton years he came down with an awful case of typhoid fever. I cannot reconstruct in what year. He was sick at length in the Princeton infirmary and used to point out the building to me when we went to Princeton in later years. I think that this truly historic illness greatly undermined his health. When a certain summer came, he was still convalescing when the family migrated up to Greensboro ~~for the summer~~. They ~~The family~~ toyed with the notion of sending him out west for a year so that he could regain his strength but the wartime atmosphere as well as their limited financial resources of ~~the family~~ (his father was a Presbyterian "preacher" in Baltimore) caused this wise project to remain a fantasy. When we married in May 1930 he had a truly unrelenting insomnia about which he complained bitterly for years. He had two walls of our first bedroom on East 52nd St. painted black (the ones that reflected the lights of the windows - Christian Gauss when he saw the room exclaimed "A good place to die"). He was immensely susceptible to light and always , always to the v. end, insisted on having lights that shone in his eyes put out, often to my great embarrassment in the houses where he was not intimate. He wore black glasses in the country and eyeshields in the museum while hanging pictures. Furthermore he seemed to have for years and years after our marriage a susceptible stomach all too prone to indigestion without rational provocation and at a moment's notice.

So in the first years of marriage and on and on this delightful. irresistible, poetic-looking man, part archaic Greek , ~~xxxx~~ or with a leonardesque pointed smile and the melancholy of a Picasso 1905-6 , became a preoccupying responsibility from the point of view ~~x~~ of health. I took it all most seriously knowing that for years at Vassar, Princeton , Harvard, Wellesley he had lived and eaten casually with absolute self-neglect~~xx~~ hardly unpacking a suitcase. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ He had such insonia that he arose at any time in the middle of the night and ~~xxxxxxx~~ moved endlessly around the room. He broke my sleep and within a few months I ~~went to sleep~~ sought refuge on the couch in our living room on 52nd St. (424 E 52nd I think) . We never shared a bedroom again. We had part-time maids who cooked, some good, some bad. If he did not like what came on the table he left it - or worse - he ate it and ~~xxxx~~ then had indigestion . This went on for years and some doctors said that he had diverticulitis. He ~~xxxxxxx~~ complained always about his insomnia, eyes and stomach. I was wrong to pay attention and to inquire, I should have ignored and not listened. Only after many years I hit upon the notion of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ being more casual. It worked and gradually he forgot to complain.

Another thing to be said about these early years is that he had ~~used to have~~ such marvellous dreams that he used to tell me ~~xxxx~~ in the mroning . If only I had written them down! But do people know the "magic moment" when they are in it?

The family ~~They~~ used to drive to Greensboro ~~xxxxx~~ from Baltimore, a long and slow expedition in the cars of those times. My father-in-law Mr. Barr was a man of extraordinary sweetness and sensitivity. He willingly stopped the car whenever Alfred ~~xxxx~~ saw a butterfly that he

he needed to catch. Butterflies and stamps were the beginning of Alfred's collector's instincts. He mounted the butterflies with extreme delicacy - I saw him do it when he tried to interest his daughter and or his nephew Tony - in vain. As for stamps they not only complemented and re-inforced his knowledge of geography and of history but they were an early training in categorizing and disposing ~~xxxx~~ visual material. Years later when we were were in Italy and Stuttgart, especially in 1932-33 and later, I used ~~to~~ to take many photographs. When they were returned (from the shop) Alfred and I looked at them avidly not for quality, but for subject and composition. When it came to disposing them on the black pages of the ~~photograph~~ albums A. arranged and grouped or separated them as though he were hanging a wall in a museum. I avidly tried to learn but when, years later, he pretended to let me try my hand at hanging some few pictures, tentatively, on a museum wall - I failed miserably.

No one can imagine what it was to see Alfred "hanging". Coming to the later years I see him first ~~using one of~~ perching on one of those sit-down ~~sticks~~ canes with two opening flanges ~~that older persons or mountain walkers used to rest where two flanges open out on which the tourist rests briefly and in an oscillating way~~. ~~From this he proceeded to~~ Later he allowed himself the luxury of a wheel chair simply because the hanging process was so immensely serious.. Even though he ~~had~~ planned it ~~all~~ in ~~his head~~ advance when it came to the ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ actuality of it all there were considerations of light and inter-relations that even he, with his totally clear vision, had not quite foreseen. ~~Walls~~ Galleries now ~~N~~ in the museum, are hung coarsely but the public does not notice. Well - there he was with the ~~hanging~~ Working crew, first ~~disposing~~ arranging the pix on the floor and then disposing them on the wall, some in groups, some separate , all ~~somehow even though thought~~ groups and separations

from MSB: "respect for the work of art was at the bottom of it all. An insistence to make each work look its best."

in advance yet subject to trial and error. Dorothy Miller was most of the time in this battle-field trying, thinking, disposing, disapproving, re-thinking whole walls, whole galleries, because although thought out in advance "things didn't work". (insert) This hanging took immense time - the crews working with devotion - and I suspect, also figuring their overtime. Only few people could possibly have seen the difference between a well-hung show and another hung pell-mell. But an immense respect for the work of art and the echoes between one and another, the over and under tones, the contrasts of color, content and technique - the space that each work demanded or did not need, went into this subtle arrangment. When I take my students to museums I try to make them see the absurdities and failures of "hanging " in the Metropolitain but they are quite insensitive to my remarks. They don't even see my point when I say that the frame is casting a shadow into the picture , they don't see that things in the corners are not getting enough light, they are not bothered by reflections on the glass, they don't care if the picture is hung too high so that they don't see. Good or indifferent hanging works on the sub-conscious of the visitor, only a museum person realizes what's going on.

In this envelope there is also a rough sketch of a VIRGIN AND CHILD now in the Museo Capodimonte in Naples. It was attributed to Correggio but I hope that this attribution has been changed. Alfred must have been struck by it in his first Wanderjahr with Ed King (year yet to be ascertained) because when in the autumn of 1932 I picked him off a boat in Naples we saw this picture together. As one does in museums he had a sense of recognition

greeting an old friend.
a feeling of [illegible]. My first initiation of a true love for works of art came from these [illegible] moments [illegible] when Alfred introduced me to things he had long before admired. Later, as time went on we formed new allegiances and our "recognitions" multiplied in common ~~for works of art of the more recent past.~~

(written in 1984)

Although I don't think you would be very much interested at the moment in knowing about your family I can't believe that soomer or later you won't become curious about it so I'll write down now as much as I have time for. I remember asking my mother all sorts of questions around 1933 or later and being so fascinated that I could never hear enough but somehow by this time she seemed to have a certain dislike for long-ago events, she was disengaged from them and no longer told anecdotes visually as she had during my childhood so that only a few episodes of her early years are photographed in my braincells.

She had many brothers and they decided to teach their sisters to smoke so they rolled cigarettes out of dead leaves, lined up the girls on a fence and forced them to smoke them to the bitter end. My mother already in my earliest memories was an inveterate smoker and only learned to desist in advanced old age.

Then there was the proof of courage: one of the brothers defied my mother to take a bite in the back of a dead mouse til her teeth met the spine. She did. It was always an accepted fact that she was very brave, I knew it, my father knew it, the servants knew it. During the first war when we were already living in the Via Pierluigi Da Palestrina after my father's death, the air raid sirens blew for the first and only time around 5 in the morning and, as had been officially announced, the electric lights flickered and went out all over Rome. We jumped out of bed and Erminia and I hastily put on our dressing gowns to go into the celler but as we met in the corridor to run downstairs my mother appeared fully clothed and and instead of seeking refuge with us she opened the portone*and sallied forth

*front door of the apartment house.

into the deserted streets to see the show. Alas, it was a false alarm.

Small wonder that I was always more interested in my mother's family rather than my father's. My grandfather, George Douglas Fitzmaurice, a tall and handsome man married my grandmother Elisabeth Shearam (the spelling should be checked in the Protestant Cemetary in Rome) and they lived in Dungarvan, County Waterford in Southern Ireland. They were Protestants. I only understood why when I met Desmond Fitzgerald who married Loulou de la Falaise. He explained to me that in the 18th Century the landed gentry of Ireland were given an alternative by the Crown either to become Protestants and retain their lands or to remain Catholics but be dispossed. The Fitsmaurices are related to the Landsdowns and I shall look this up in the Public Library in N.Y. See room in Met Museum.

My grandmother as I remember it had more money than my grandfather; they owned land and horses. My grandfather must have bben a poor administrator; he went in for investments such as a watercloset for horses. For years they lived on in Dungarvan and sent the many brothers to the best universities. The girls were kept at home but had governesses who taught them languages. One by one the boys emigrated to New Zealand, to Tasmania, heaven knows. My mother and Autie Elsie perpetuated in my mind that the girls were all heroines but that the brothers amounted to nothing. My poor grandmother went to see one off at Cork (New Queestown) and to her dismay(she was intensely pious) while she was waving at the pier she noticed a wee boat going out to the ship with a lone woman who managed to get on. It was the poor boy's mistress.

I imagine that these unfortunate young men wrote rarely and my poor grandmother must have had them always on her mind. One time around 1907 she appeared unexpectedly in the Via del Bauine and closeted herself at length with my mother. When she left I asked my mother why she had come because she was already quite aged and rarely ventured forth alone. My mother shrugged and explained that one of the boys had died in some distant land and that my grandmother had wept copiously and had to be comforted.

Sometime in the 1880's my grandfather had used up the family fortune and they emigrated to Paris. There were still 2 boys: my uncle Fred and Tom(?) who died in harrowing circumtances, Lilly who perished of consumption, Auntie Katie, my mother (May) and Auntie Elsie.

Their poverty was extreme. My grandmother had to rise every morning to bring charcoal to cook breakfast, my grandfather ran out of shoes and went job-hunting in galoshes, the two eldest girls gave English lessons. They were so young and pretty that so as to look older they made themselves frumpy hats with some horrid ribbon brought from Ireland that had a never to be forgotten pattern of frog's eggs. Auntie Elsie, the youngest went to the French public schools. She was the most brillant of the 3 girls and one time as a school prize she was given a ticket to go to see Sarah Bernhardt then in the prime of her glory but she didn't own a presentable dress and had to renounce. When she came home from school, if there was no one at home, she did her lessons sitting on the dark stairs and a neighbor, M. Richard struck up a friendship with her and the rest of the family.

Auntie Katie in those years must have been flamboyantly beautiful withimmense masses of red hair that reached her knees, grey-blue eyes no freckles and a proud figure for those times: small waist and a remarkable bosom which years latter she used to pat playfully and exclaim: "Une poitrine de Venus". One of the women to whom she taught English told her that she was far too good to waste her youth giving lessons and introduced her to Barie Theophilidy a Greek stockbroker, 25 years her senior. I have no idea when this marriage took place nor whether it was possible for her to help out her indigent family. They had one son George Fitzmaurice named after my grandfather. There are photographs of Theo, George and Auntie Katie in Villas on the Riviera. They must have lived a life of ease.

By and by my mother went off to Golau near Breslau in Silesia (now in East Germany) to be a governess to a Junken family, the Von Roeders. I have only scattered memories of this, she must have stayed there several years. The Von Roeder boys serenaded her, there were wild lillies of the valley in the countryside and she saw Kaiser Wilhelm's white Uhlans. She became friends with this family and kept on a correspondence with them. Years later in 1911 at Pre St. Didier under Courmayene where we were spending the summer, she identified a middleaged gentleman named Axenfels who, although a Russian jew, had married Frieda, one of the Von Roeder girls and was now a widower. One day as she was sitting with him and my father having coffee I was practicing flinging up my patent leather pumps into the air an catching them on my feet. One of the shoes misfired and landed on Mr. Axenfels who went pale with horror because he thought it was a nihilist bomb.

Meantime in Paris my grandfather had found work at Old England a department store that went in for expensive British goods and clothes. I have no idea what the nature of his employment was but he was so very handsome and distinguished that he must have been in contact with customers rather than secluded in a back office. The winter climate in Paris began to get the better of him and sometime in the nineties he obtained a transfer to Rome. Fred was left in Paris where he eventually married and had a daughter named Isabelle and he, my grandmother, my mother and Auntie Elsie went to Rome and first lived in the Via Torino where my grandfather's Irish setter, Milord was poisoned by neighbors because he barked.

By this time my grandmother must have been fairly exhausted and neither she nor my grandfather ever learned Italian well. This left Autie Elsie and my mother very much on their own. Auntie Elsie wanted to be a painter and my mother taught languages: English, French and German but of course they were still young and spirited and wanted to go out. Bicycling was the rage. Heaven knows, how, either wheeling out into the campapua or at a hall at the Circo lo della Stampa she met my father Virginio Scolari.

He was born in Bassano Veneto when it still belonged to the Austrians. At school the teacher when dissatisfied used to hurl a huge ball of hemp held together with wax into the face of the children. There were revolts in the Piazza delle Erbe and the Austrians burntdown the covered bridge over the Brenta (it is now long since rebuilt). My Italian grandfather whom I never knew married twice. By the first marriage there were my father, Cesare, Alfonso, Giovanna (Nanna), Arpalice and Ovidio

by the second with

there was Juigi (a conductor who became a big wheel in the Accademia di Santa Cecilai in Rome) and two sisters Maria and Anita both lame because of some disorder of the hips. There was a tradition of culture in the family because a not forgotten member of the preceding generations had been a distinguised Dante commentator and in school where the Divine Comedy was pounded into us I always delighted in finding the name Scolari in the Scartazzini edition. There Scolaris were descended from the Buomelemonti of Florence as you Tory remembered to my astonishment when we were in the Gennadios Library in Athens. There There are inscriptions pertaining to them on the palace opposite the church of S. Trimivita in Florence and to the Scolaris in Venice which I'll copy when I get there.

By by the 19th and early 20th centuries this family was humble and provincial and the males had to leave Bassano to seek employment. I think that at the start my father did something in connnection with the railroads in Sicily and perhaps as a result of this he had an abiding contempt for all Italy south of Rome. Somewhere, somehow he met Giorgio Sangiorgi a talented dealer in works of art and old furniture and objects, he was an antiquario as one says in Italy but with distinguished customers such as Wilhelm Bode of the Kaiserfriedrick Musuem, Mrs. Garnder and J. Pierpont Morgan I still remember, when we were living on the Piazza della Liberta, that my father would sit with my mother at the dining room table concocting suitable letters in English or German to these important clients. The Galleria Saugiorgi was and <u>still is</u> on the lower floors

of the Polarzo Borghere with entrance on the Via Ripetta,. Once when I went there as a child I saw a mouse. All letters were written by hand and reproduced on an inky press. There was a grand Cortile full of flowers and when we returned from our summer holidays an employee called Bei sent up a welcoming bunch of brown-eyed susans to our apartment.

When my father proposed to my mother he already had a position at Samgiorgi's and in later life my mother would remarke bitterly than he had selected her to imitate his employer who had just married an Englishwoman.

I suppose that when my mother, then probably 37 or 38, at last saw a chance of escape from giving lessons and living in the house of her parents when she subsidized with all she earned must have been amused and tempted. She announced the engagement to the family and went bicycling with my future father starting from the Piazza Del Popolo. Then serious doubts came over her and she suggested to my grandfather than she whould prefer not to follow through with it. His Irish temper flared up and he bawled "Go back to your man I have kept you long enough!"

She was married in a rich ivory satin dress I came to know well during the many years it was preserved in our cupboards and a white tulle veil with which, when I was perhaps 19, we made an immense ruffle for a "Pierrette" costume at carnival time[it was a mad success, and I danced in it til the wee hours some 3 or 4 times]

The date of the marriage, 1898, was engraved inside my mother's wedding ring, I used to love to look at it, but don't remember the month and day my mother donated it when Mussolini exorted all Italian women to give their gold rings to their country. Thereafter she wore a steel one which I still preserve.

I remember nothing of their honeymoon except that my father complained about the expenses. There must have been some sort of "tendresse" between them at least at the start because I remember in my earliest years that my father sometimes called my mother "Blusetta" as a pet name. My mother called him Gino from the start because Virginio, his real name, was too peculiar (named after the Virgin Mary). They settled from the start in Via del Babuino 85 some 10 or 15 doors from the Piazza di Spagna on the Pincio side (you refused to go to look at it one tired Sunday when we were in Rome together). It was on the first floor (American 2nd) very dark and quite large. There was a small terrace overlooking the Via del Babuino with window boxes for pink Geraniaums and sometimes strawberries. Overlooking the dark courtyard there was another terrace with ivy on a trellis. Miraculously, one time some 2 or 3 chestnut trees began to grow because I used to cary back chestnuts from the Pincio and some must have fallen on the soil of the window boxes. There was a great drawing room with a huge deep rug in blue, orange and

red, it had a fireplace and good furniture. It is here that my first great Christmases were staged , the Christmas tree with real candles that made a delicious smell as they burnt a twig here and there. The presents were never wrapped so that when I went in I saw the toys all in the open and didn't know which way to go. My father, mother, Aunt Elsie, Grandpa and Grandma were present, but not my nurse Donda (short for Gioconda) because "servants" did not participate in these high moments.

At the start my early years were very lovely. There were three servants and my father and mother "received", in other words my mother was at home for tea on the first and third Friday of every month and besides they gave dinner parties to which my father, always a gourmet, gave particular attention. All the food "services" were used - admirable plates, Wedgewood cups and saucers and baccarat glasses with gold rims, carefully chosen wines and mountainous deserts from Aragno called choax montes. My mother had certain party dresses I still remember and wore fresh flowers in her hair. Opposite our house there was a flower shop called Cardella, sheep used to go to pasture toward the Piazza del Popolo every morning, a charming smelly peasant used to ring our bell and sell wild flowers he had picked in the countryside - wild gladiolas, cyclamen, violets, narcissus and anemones. On Sundays we used to get into a Caroazza, pick up my grandmother and go for long rides mostly to the Giancolo or Villa Borghese. I was immensely bored. Then we'd

go back to tea to the Via Maria Adelaide where my grandparents and Auntie Elsie had moved. There was jam from Crosse and Blackwell and this was all I had to look forward to in the great boredom of Sundays. Of course I never understood that all the love, hope and wish to transmit of five adults were concentrated on me. My grandmother was so frightfully pious, my grandfather never understood my age range, Auntie Elsie was aloof and too intelligent, my father was involved in his affairs and vaguely foreign, my mother was gay, beautiful, fun to be with but very frightening too because she had all power over me and would get angry and punish.

One day when I was five after lunch I got the most frightful headache and lay down flat on the cassabancs (called cassone in English) in the dining room, later I had a terifying nosebleed and this was the beginning of typhoid fever thanks to which I scream in terror when I see a cockroach. On the left of my bed there was a little tear in the brown wallpaper and somehow this gave rise to the delirium dream of tortoises crawling all over my body. Ever since I have had an extreme loathing and fear of low-slung crawling things. Auntie Elsie, my mother or ? slept in the nearby bed, acting as improvised nurses the way on always did in Europe those days. My grandfather brought me unwanted presents from Old England such as a green velvet pincushion with a mottled deer on it - he shook his head and told my mother I wouldn't live. The fever must have been very great because I constantly had icebags on my head and Bastianelli, the much trusted family doctor, s suggested that they put me in a tepid bath becoming colder little by little to diminish the fever. But this tub was installed at the end

of the room where there was little light and I was so frightened that they only tried it once. Throughout I could hear the grown-ups mumbling about whether they should cut off my hair to diminish the hold of fever and this would have been a good thing to do because it was such a huge mop but they had a great reverence for it and desisted.

Later Visions: One of the doors into my rooms was opened and a blue balloon rose to the ceiling. A gift from the world of open air. Another time Donda opened the door. I drifted down to the floor, picked up a slipper and threw it at her. Why?

I must have been on my way to recovery. They had to teach me to walk again and constantly fed me zabaione and treitti di ta schino in bianco. (turkey breats in cream sauce)

All through my childhood my mother read to me, Grimm's fairytales, Alice in Wonderland and I had lovely books illustrated by Walter Crane and the glossy little books with pictures by _____? Polter.

Shortly after I recovered from the typhoid fever she had books sent from England and began to teach me to read and write. I have very awkward hands. I couldn't quite see why we had to go in for this but I submitted.

Then to my dismay when I was about 6½ an Italian Signorina appeared to give me regular lessons in Italian. Her cheeks were very pink and her eyes dark. My mother introduced me and I said tu to her. She instantly reproved me. I had said nothing but tu to Donda and the maids - I had never learned the form Lei. I disliked this Signorina

right off. She made me draw pins and hooks with red or blue pencils preparatory to learning to write all over again. She made me do a sort of paper interlace called lavorini frebeliani from the renowned child educator Froebal and she made me learn Italian poems by heart with gestures. On Christmas day I was made to recite one of these before my father, mother, Auntie Elsie and my grandparents; you can imagine, with declamatory gestures! They were convulsed and laughed until tears streamed out of their eyes.

To play the piano was then considered a necessary accomplishment of all women so my mother arranged an exchange of lessons with a friend: Mrs. Chiovenda would give me piano lessons and Mau would teach Bea Chiovenda English. By this time Donda had slipped out of my life to marry a hunch-back shoemaker by whom she had two boys so Ida, a wizened little woman who was forever trying to give me little cards with images of Saints was appointed to take me around because I was not allowed to walk alone on the streets til the age of 11 or 12. One morning she took me to my piano lessons as -usual. The Chiovedas lived in a tight eighteenth century street the Via dei Pontefici opposite the entrance of the Symphony hall. The Augusteo built after the tomb of Augustus (Mussolini diminished the hall and the tight streets that surrounded it to free the remains of the colossal circular tomb now planted with cypresses). When I arrived Mrs. Chiovenda was not ready so I went to pass the time with Bea who had a little toy theatre; we used dolls as actors and improvised palys. At a particularly exciting moment I let out a shrill

scream and Mrs. Chiovenda came rushing down the corridor pale with fear because she thaught that Renzo, Bea's little brother had fallen out the window. When she realized the shriek was mine she worked herself into a fine rage and with frightening declamations and threats locked me into the remote drawing room. I sat there for quite a while with no sense of guilt but rather with a cool indignation because I felt that she had no right to scold me as she had. I don't know how long I waited thinking that she might return either to punish me or to give me a piano lesson. But nothing happened and the whole apartment was silent. There was a second door to the dining room which lead into Mr. Chiovenda's office, I tried it gently, he was not there. I stole out the hall, opened the front door and ran downstairs. I asked the foatiera whether she would allow me to wait in her place till my maid came to fetch me and she consented. I had not been there long before Clorinda, the Chiovenda's cook burst in, her face red with excitement. She forced me to go upstairs again and at the apartment door Mr. and Mrs. Chiovenda were waiting. She flushed with excitment. Questions, reproofs and loud invectives flew. I looked Mr. Chiovenda straight in the eyes, stamped my foot and yelled "I shall never set foot in your house again" (Mon mettero fini piede in case tua) I can't remember,but I suspect that somehow he, who had not witnessed the preceding scenes and was probably used to his wife's temperment, was amused by my spunkiness. Thereafter he always called me "Solidatacio" which means tough soldier.

There were no telephones at that time, but somehow my mother

instantly knew that I had committed some monstrous naughtiness. She locked me forthwith into my room, closed the persieenes so I could neither read nor play and sentenced me to bread and water for 24 hours. However, in the afternoon Mrs. Sangiorgi and her daughter Flora were coming to tea so at short notice I had to put on my best afternoon clothes, appear graciously as if nothing had happened, only to return to be imprisoned in my room when they departed.

In these times my mother often used to be sick mostly because of her throat; in those days tonsils were not removed at the right moment in childhood and were constantly suceptible to infection. So I had no serious premonition when Bastianelli, our doctor, turned up rather often in our house. Children are amazingly self-absorbed and I was so busy that I had no premonition of any crisis. Later I heard that one day when the doctor came to examime my mother and was as usual at a loss to diagnose what was wrong, she saw him to the door and rather flirtatiously turned to him with a smile. He saw her neck at a new angle and noticed a slight swelling of the throat glands. Basedof! This was a hardly discovered illness of the glands and the prognosis was either madness or death. My mother stayed in bed for a year and a half and when she slowly began to get up and come to meals in the dining room she saw that my table manners had gone to pieces and she wept. There were bags under her eyes and she had lost her beauty.

My father was made to understand that the apartment in the Vai del Boheirino was too dark and dank for her. We moved to Piazza della Liberta 10.

This was the end of childhood.

(Insert Villeggiature-German lessons declensions conjugations)'

The new apartment was on the 4th floor and sunny. It overlooked the trees of the Piazza. The Ponte Margherta and not too far away the Valadier arches and ramps that climaxed with the Belveder of the Pinao. Now we could see the Girandela from our own windows without having to go to the roof terraced my grandparents in the Via Maria Adelaida. There were many imperceptible changes. My parents no longer gave their formal dinner parties, my mother stopped giving me German lessons but continued to teach English part time at her school the Scrivina Foa Fusindo. A new maid was hired called Crisina. There was no other help. But the glorious novelty was that my parents decided to send me to the public school in the Via tacit. After years of private tutoring I had flunked the esame di mataita which proved that the successive Sigonine had not done a good job.

There were 40 girls in the Quarta elementare some were the daughters of professionals but many were the daughters of shopkeepers and clerks. I was intoxicated by the belonging at last in a vast company of children of my own age. We were captives in the classroom for hours on end, we carried our own lunches and ate them at our benches but on fine days were were given some playtime in the yard and went wild. After school before going home we ran races using the vespacnne at the corner for a goal. During the winter. I got chileblainsbecause there was no heat in the classrooms but more improtantly my mother discovered that I had lice in my huge mop of hair. She loaded up my head with petroleum and

thus exterminated the lice but raised awful boils all over my scalp. I learned to read aloud by imitating Evelina Mannini who had capured the trick of speaking loud and clear, watching the punctuation and changing tone.

Our teacher Signoaina Tedeschi didn't want us to pack up our books at the end of the day until after the bell rang, but the children were frantic to leave after sitting for hours in the same benches. One afternoon in severe tones she ordered the girls who had packed to raise their hands. I had, but I kept my arms folded on my desk. When I got home I was overcome with remorse for this ~~for~~ was a form of lying. In torents of tears and rolling around the dining room floor in agony I told my mother who had always disciplined me to tell the truth. She made me write a letter of confession and apology which we carried by hand to the teacher's house. The next day I could hardly raise my eyes to her but as I went by her on the way to the playground she patted me on the shoulder with a smile. I understood right then that my mother and I had overdone it and that for Italians a lie was not such a black sin and neither was cheating. In time the whole class had to take the dreaded esame di maturita and of course we had problems in arithemetic which at that time I adored. When I came out of the exam room Signorina Tedschi was at the door and she anxiously asked me what result I had got for the long division. I told her and it was correct. So she asked "Did you tell Poetronieri?"

I said "no of course not". Her face fell, obviously she had wanted me to help out this classmate who was poor in arithemetic.

This was a lesson in double standards and as the years went on I understood that one behaved in one way with Italians and in another with English and Americans.

After this I had another year of private tutoring and at last my parents put me in a regular school the ? , where I met the first real friend of my early years. Lina Antioni. We had a ferocious Latin teacher who had a wooden hand and a very elegant French teacher who used to fall fast asleep during our lessons. This school was in the Palazzio and every day on the Via del ? I went by the huge marble pool that had belonged to the colossal statue of Constantine but I never knew any thing about it and accepted it as an everyday thing without any curiosity. Years later I had occasion to climb another stairway in the same palazzo and there on pedestals at each landing were the emperor's marble figures.

The dining room in both apartments was used as a living room and often after dinner my father with the help of my mother used to compose letters in various languages ~~or German~~ to clients of the Galleria Sau the celebrated director of the Kaiser Friederich Museum in Berlin, J.P. Morgan and Mr. Garnder the husband of Mrs. Zack Gardner who handled the money matters. There were also intense consultations about where to go for the summer. We went to many places but never never south of Rome. We went to Tagliacozzo when I still had Donda who carried a candle in her purse to

keep me happy when the train went through tunnels. There I had a nightmare of a "red indian" dangling an sword over my head (I had just seen one of Buffalo Bill's frightening shows) and I also rode in one of the first automobiles owned by the wealthy Mr. Festa. It was a miracle, a carriage without horses! My mother for the occassion swaithed her hat in grey veils. We went to Levanto where no children would play with me though my mother made me an Indian headress with turkey feathers. I learned to swim and to dive very badly. Recurrently, however we went to Badia Prataglia in the Casentine driving laboriously from Biblica in an open carriage. My mother spent days and days preparing the trunks full of books and quantities of clothes for the daytime and for the evening because we always changed for dinner. Walking into the dining room for the first meal was crucial. I would cast my eye on every table to see whether there were children and to size them up. We used to take long walks every afternoon and my mother helped me pick wild flowers and told me their names. Country hotels were very simple and quiet in those days when no one had a car; people were thrown upon one another's company and one had a static restful feeling staying for a month or longer in the same place.

Brief autobiography of Marga Barr to 1930

I was born in Rome on Jauary 18th, 1901 six months before the death of Queen Victoria. The first years of the century up to the outbreak of the war in 1914 were like the tail-end of the nineteenth century; wonderfully quiet and civilised. Fire engines were drawn by horses. There were no trolleys~~tracks~~ in Rome. The great piazzas were uncrowded. Sheep were driven out to pasture through the via del Babuino every morning. Christmas trees were lighted with ~~real~~ wax candles.

I spoke English with my mother and father, they spoke French to each other. I spoke Italian with my nurse and the cook. I had private teachers till the age of ten, then I went to public school and finally to the Ginnasio and Liceo Mamiani on the Corso V. Emanuele. One great day during the first war Highlanders ~~with~~ playing their bagpipes marched down this corso. We went wild with excitement, poured out of the school and ran after them shouting: "Viva l'Italia"

My father had died in 1916, my mother and I were short of money. She insisted that I should go to the University. It was possible to hold a job at the same time because it was not necessary to attend the lectures. One could buy wretched mimeographed ~~notes~~ notes; you boned up for exams twice a year.

All the formal education I ever had in Italy was by rote; no originality or research were encouraged in my time. I decided to write a thesis in History of Art under Adolfo Venturi. I was working at the same time at the American Embassy under the naval attaché. Compared to my contemporaries in other jobs I was well paid because the exchange with the lira was favourable. I went dancing a lot and on Sundays we'd go to swim at a deserted beach north of Ostia.

A schoolmate of mine had found a job teaching Italian at Vassar. She wrote glowing letters full of amazing facts. I envied her and felt cramped living always in Rome and always with my mother. The head of the department of Italian at Vassar came by Rome in the summer of 1925. He asked me whether I had a Laurea from the University so I confessed that I hadn't had time to finish my thesis. For him this was splendid news because he could get me into the U.S. under the classification of student. In the Vassar catalogue they used the formula student assistant. Little did I realise that I really would be forced to study again, the idea repelled me. Dean Thomson at Vassar was very firm so besides teaching I took courses in the history of art.

In 1927/28 I met Russell Hitchcock who had come to teach History of Art at Vassar. Both he and I were bored to death and all news of the outside world was welcome. He was in active correspondence with Alfred and Jere Abbott who wrote feverishly about their experiences in Russia. He read me the letters so I became familiar with these two.

I had a Carnegie fellowship to continue my studies in history of art at New York University and settled down to live in New York for a year. Agnes Rindge in her course at Vassar on modern sculpture had managed to give the students some sound notions about the great post-impressionists. I went to the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in the Heckscher Building and signed the register. At Thanksgiving Agnes Rindge came down and I met again with her. She introduced me to Alfred who thanks to his letters to Russell was not unknown to me; surprisingly he too seemed to have heard of me.

MSB doc written at M's request by Helen Franc (M paid for it!)

Margaret Scolari Barr, widow of the late Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first Director of The Museum of Modern Art, was born in Rome, Italy, January 18, 1901. Her father, Virgilio Scolari, an antiques dealer, was a scion of the Venetian [illegible]ily, one of whom, known as Pippo Spano, was painted [illegible]th-century artist Andrea del Castagno. Her mother, [illegible]ce, was an Anglo-Irish Protestant who had long [illegible]inent. Following Virgilio Scolari's death in 1916 [illegible]r, Margaret and her mother were in straitened [illegible] attending the Liceo Mamiani she eked out their [illegible]ng private lessons. From 1919 to 1922, she attended [illegible] specializing in humanistic and linguistic studies. [illegible]l examinations, she entered the business world for a brief time before going to work as a bilingual secretary in the office of the naval attaché in the American Embassy.

MSB 6/2 from box 2/ Bf 24

In 1925 she came to the United States as a "student assistant," teaching Italian at Vassar College while taking courses there in the history of art, for which she received the M.A. in 1927. As she still held only a temporary visa, in order to maintain the requisite legal status as a student she enrolled in graduate courses in art history at New York University, commuting from Poughkeepsie to continue teaching Italian at Vassar. In 1929 she was awarded a $2,000 Carnegie Fellowship for study and travel abroad, but on the advice of Dr. Walter W.S. Cook she moved to New York in September and continued to take courses at New York University, intending to travel in Europe during the second half of the academic year.

In the spring of 1930, Margaret Scolari was offered a position as a teacher in the art history department at Smith College, beginning in the fall; in the ensuing year, she was to succeed Professor Alfred V. Churchill as Director of the Smith College Museum of Art. This arrangement was canceled, however, because late in May 1930 she married Alfred Barr,

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to whom she had been introduced six months before while on a visit to The Museum of Modern Art by Professor Agnes Rindge of Vassar College. Though she had been known at Vassar and N.Y.U. as "Daisy," early in their acquaintance Barr had crossed out the last three letters of her given name and decided to call her "Marga," and so she was called by him and those who met her thereafter.

Fluent in Italian, French, German, and Spanish, and completely conversant with continental manners and customs, Margaret Scolari Barr was of inestimable assistance to her husband as secretary, interpreter, and translator on the many trips abroad that they took on museum business. She was also closely associated as a collaborator of Alfred Barr in the museum's development, exhibitions, and publications, though her contribution was usually anonymous; however, his comprehensive monograph, Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art, published by the museum in 1946, bears the dedication: "For my wife Margaret Scolari Fitzmaurice, advisor and invaluable assistant in the Picasso campaigns of 1931, 1932, 1936, 1939." The same trenchant word appears in "Our Campaigns," (published in The New Criterion, Spring 1987), a chronicle she wrote of the years from 1930 to 1944, when Barr was dismissed as the museum's director, which makes clear her intimate involvement in the museum's activities. One of her most important unofficial assignments came after the fall of Paris in June 1940, when the museum received innumerable urgent requests from artists seeking assistance in escaping to the United States. The voluminous correspondence this entailed was far beyond the capacity of the museum's small staff, so Barr asked his wife to undertake the operation, writing letters for his signature on official museum stationery. It was necessary to obtain for each artist a sponsor who would become financial guarantor, to find $400 for passage money, and to persuade the State Department (particularly suspicious of anyone who might be either a Communist or even leftist leaning)

to grant clearance. In this endeavor Margaret Barr worked in cooperation with Ingrid Warburg (later Mrs. Charles Wyzanski) of the Emergency Rescue Committee (now the International Rescue Committee) in New York, and with Varian Fry in Marseille, who in 1945 published an account of his American Aid Center in a book Surrender on Demand. Among the artists whose wartime immigration was facilitated in this way were Chagall, Lipchitz, Masson, Mondrian, and Tanguy, and after their arrival they and other artists-in-exile benefited by the Barrs' advice and hospitality.

From 1943 to 1980 Margaret Barr taught the history of art at Spence School, except for the year 1957 - 1958 when she had the position of translation editor at the McGraw Hill Publishing Company, working on the English-language edition of the Encyclopedia of World Art. Her monograph on the Italian sculptor Medardo Rosso (1858 - 1928), published by The Museum of Modern Art in 1963 in conjunction with an exhibition, was the first study of him to appear in English and remains the definitive study of his life and work. Previously, she had translated into Italian Charles Rufus Morey's catalogue of the Vatican Library's Museo Cristiano and made the first complete English translation of Matisse's 1908 "Notes of a Painter," which was published in the Museum of Modern Art's catalogue of the exhibition "Henri Matisse" in 1931 and reprinted in Alfred H. Barr's Matisse: His Art and His Public, 1951. She wrote an article on the Milan Triennale di Architettura of 1933 which appeared in the New York Times, and rendered into English the account (unpublished) Domenico Fontana's moving of the Rome obelisk.

Margaret Barr's brilliant intellect and sparkling wit led to close friendships not only with artists, museum officials, and dealers but also with leading critics and art scholars, among them Bernard Berenson, Richard Offner, Erwin Panofsky, Millard Meiss, Richard Krautheimer, and Peter von Blanckenhagen.

In 1940 the Barrs moved from their first apartment at 2 Beekman Place to 49 East Ninety-sixth Street, New York; they also maintained a house in Greensboro, Vermont, where they spent their summers. Their only child, Victoria, is an artist residing in New York.

May 27, 1985

Dear Helen,

Here is a xerox of the artists' rescue and one of Myself befpre 1930

I don't think I have sufficient claim to fame. Having attended Alfred when he was assembling shows does not count, it is only natural.

Having taught in a private school does not count.

All that remains is the rescue or having written a little book on the sculptor Medardo Rosso.

I don't think it is enough.

Father Virginio Scolari of the distinguished Venetian branch of the Scolari family her mother Mary Fitzmaurice anglo-Irish.

Please charge me your correct editor's fee.

It is cowardly of me not to do this myself.

Love

Daisy

940 September into Spring 1941

A.'s office is swamped with requests for help from all manner of persons connected with the arts who have fled Paris. The Museum is understaffed and there is no one who has the time to undertake this bureaucratic and tedious work. A. makes M. responsible for the whole operation but will of course sign official letters under the letterhead of the Museum. From the start he decides that the Museum will only attempt to rescue artists, not critics, scholars, or dealers, because the process is so laborious and in a way expensive. For each individual an application for a visa must be filed with the State Department. The responses are slow, the excuse being that it must be proven incontrovertibly that the applicant is not, and never was, a communist or a leftist sympathiser. At the same time it is necessary to find a sponsor for each applicant and this sponsor must sign an affidavit that the applicant will

never, because of unemployment, become a burden to the state. Finally, from the same generous sponsor or from another source, $400.00 must be raised for the ocean passage of each individual. Invaluable in this work is the advice and cooperation of the Emergency Rescue Committee at 122 East 42nd Street, but results actually begin to come through thanks to the American Aid Center established by Varian Fry in Marseilles[2]. His persistence and courage should go down in history. At a fairly late stage of this rescue operation Eleanor Roosevelt prevails on the State Department to speed up the granting of visas.[3] Here in New York, although work is begun on many individuals, good results are not often obtained, either because the artist has moved away from the only address he has given, or because he has been apprehended. or because he has decided to resettle elsewhere but does not inform the Museum so that transactions drag on. The artists who actually get here, some with and some without wives, are Tanguy, Masson, Mondrian, Lipchitz, Ernst, and Chagall, the latter after writing A. that he would consider coming to the U.S. but that he expected the Museum to put at his disposal a farm with a long wall because he "was in the mood to paint cows."[4]

[2] A. and M. did not communicate with him regularly since the meeting on the Bremen in 1935, and his presence in Marseilles comes as a welcome surprise. See: Fry, Varian. Surrender on Demand. New York: Random House; 1945.

[3] See: Profile, Helen Wolff, The New Yorker, August 2, 1982, p. 54.

[4] Prof. John Rewald in a letter of July 30, 1982, reminds M. of this curious letter. Unfortunately, all the correspondence pertaining to the rescue of artists is inexplicably lost.

M's Biography

1901 b. January 18 Via del Babuino 85, Rome

1906 At age five (5) seriously ill with typhoid fever.

1907 or 08 My mother very sick with an illness rather similar to what we call hyper-thyroid (at the time it was called Basedov's sickness). When she slowly convalesces the doctor suggests that our large apartment is too dark

1910-11 We move to Piazza della Libertá' #10.
Anxious to obtain colonies, Italy invades Tripolitania, and Lybia which had belonge to Turkey.

1914 August 3, 1914 beginning of first World War.
Germany declares war on France.

1915 Italy enters the war on the side of France and England.

1916 September. my father dies. Shortly afterwards, defeat follows defeat on the Italian border with Austria. (CAPORETTO)

1917 My mother and I moved to ~~the~~ Via Pierluigi da Palestrina 63. We ~~were~~ are very short of money.

1918 November 11. End of First World War

1919 June. M graduates from the Liceo. ~~M~~ She fits in giving some private lessons.

September. M's mother insists that she go to the University, ~~M unwilling to embark on further studies~~. Unwillingingly ~~xxxx~~ She signs up for medical school at the University. Takes anatomy, and chemistry but gives up after three months. Shifts to Lettere a term which embraces all ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ humani and linguistics studies.

1920-22 June. M takes the first oral exams for Lettere and has not lost an academic year; Shortly she'll have to learn Greek.

1922 First works in an insurance office, then in a busin office. Through a connection of her mother M goes to work in the office of the naval attaché, of the U.S. embassy. (Capt. Hasbrouk who was succeeded by will be Capt. Kenneth Castleman).

1925 Late August or early September. Professor Bruno Rosselli who was Head of the Italian Department at Vassar offers M. a job as a "student assistant" in the Italian Department. Encouraged by her mother, M leaves Rome in 10 days.

~~1927~~ 1925 Sept. Teaches Italian at Vassar. Takes courses in History of Art

1927 June. Vassar M.A. in History of Art

It is necessary for ~~her~~ my temporary visa to maintain ~~her~~ my status as ~~student~~ student. So ~~Prof~~ President. McCracken suggests that I take graduate courses at NYU.

September. M. takes Graduate courses at ~~NYU~~ New York Univers Classes are held in Washington Square. ~~Took~~ takes one course with John Shapley and one with Prof. W.W.S. Cook. M. is ~~an~~ a godsend because ~~I~~ she knows languages.

~~1928 September Living Arrangements Teaching~~

1929 June. M leaves Vassar. Because through Prof. Cook = in history of art for an she has obtained a ~~an~~ Carnegie Fellowship. She wil live half a year in ~~NYC~~ New York and travel in Europe the ~~in~~ second half.

~~There~~ End of November. Agnes Rindge introduces M to Alfred Barr in the galleries of the Museum of Modern Art, then in the Heckscher building.

Jan. 3, 1986

Dear Helen,

I was so surprised that you should have remembered that I had asked you to write my obit. Thank you, that's wonderful. I yhought you would be too busy or repelled. When I dared make tnis proposal I had in mind to pay you and I enclose a check. Keep it shrt the way you did A.'s or shorter. I don't think I want to see it. I suppose copies in a sealed envelope shpuld gp tp ... to whom. I we ca speak aboit that on the phpne.

I translated Mprey's catalpgue pf the Museum Cristiano into Italian, amd Domenico Fontana's movimg of the Obelisk into English (unfortutate not published. Then I wrote the Medardo Rosso, 1963 and I taught H. of Art at Spence 1943-1980. This was possible because the school kept the job open for me when I went here and there with Alfrd - - no other reputable school would have done this for me. Turning now to the rescue of of the artists - I don8t quite see how you can fit it into an obit - that's up to you.

But let me say that if you want to write an article abut it I will do what I can to help. When I conked out at lunch (because I "last" such a short time) I was trying to say that we attempted to pull pit more than what actually came - and I am obsessed by the thought of Freundlich - I'm sure he was one of them - I seem to have heard that the Germans got him. I can graphically described where he lived with his wife - you ahpild put in that Alfred said "the Museum can only manage to help artists" and so we did not help Breton, Paul Tosenberg, Mr. and Mrs. Justin Thannhauser - I did not work on them. Curt Valentin the dealer was immensely generpus and helpful - Pierre Matisse hardly if at all - and yet he instantly took on Tanguy who was one of the ones we had helped. Iy was such a job with the State Dept. you shpid check whether a certain Mrs. Shipley was there, she was particularly hated by Panofsky/ They alwasy wanted to search pit whether the

It was cuh a job to get affidavits. Itis important to note that none of the artists ever asked the museum for help after they gpt her The wives or girlfriends used to get their clothes in thriftshops - they missed cafes and Leger trined to make the Jumble Shop on 8th St his cafe and called it Le Jeumble. They found NY exciting I'll tell y about Maya amd Eleonora Carrington acting out Paris postcards of mooney lovers - there were 14 of us in our living room.

You have enpugh to write an atyocle but I wouldn't move a step before fining a magazine that would acceot it.

This is what I had thpught ofpaying you for the obit but gu tell me if it is too little.

Just now there's been someone to pay a call and I "lasted" less than an hour. I anvy yourkitten.

Love

Daisy

obit Margo

France

May 27, 1985

Dear Helen,

Here is a xerox of the artists' rescue and one of Myself befpre 1930

Ixthinkxthexshitxshawldxsayxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I don't think I have sufficient claim to fame. Having attended Alfred when he was assembling shows does not count it is only natural.

Having taught in a private school does not count.

All that remains is the rescue or having writtena b little book on the sculptor Medardo Rosso.

I don't think it is enough.

Father Virginio Scolari of the distinguished Venetian branch of the Scolari family [xxxxmxthexsngimxirishxxxx] her mother Mary Fiyzmaurice anglo-Irish.

Please charge me you r correct editor's fee.

It is cowardly of me not to do this myself.

from Box (7) ff 12

Auntie Katie II

In the summer of 1913 my grandmother died. She had been insane for a year or more so she would not have known the difference even if Auntie Katie had come from Paris for her last days.

How many things must have happened to her since I had last seen her. Life in those days was compartmentalized and "children" were told ~~XXXXXX~~ little about serious events that didn't concern them. As I reconstruct things I suspect that George, my first cousin and Auntie Katie's adored son, was sent off to start a career in India; among my old postcards there's one from him of the Taj Mahal. Somehow things didn't work out and soon he was back ~~to~~ in Paris. When the First World War broke out he wanted to be an aviator--the word pilot came into use later. Filled with horror, Auntie Katie coaxed him into trying his chances in America. He wrote my grandfather a respectful letter asking him for permission to use the name Fitzmaurice. Family stories and his obit confirm that when he ran out of money he slept on the benches of Central Park, but always with his gaiters because, like his mother, he believed in impeccable attire. He made contact with the movie world through Mme Pathé (this was a great firm in early movies that made feature-length silents and their own edition of the news which one avidly saw until the advent of television). He must have helped Mme Pathé to decorate her apartment or else he taught her how to dress. She launched him. It is through her that he found his way to Hollywood; now he is best remembered for directing "The Perils of Pauline." When Auntie Katie died in Menton in 1919, Auntie

MAY

Elsie and May had great difficulty making contact with him. I guess the two of them, both penniless, hoped he might help financially. All I remember is this: they were intent upon sending him his mother's wedding ring and were at a loss because he never wrote, never responded. When I went to teach at Vassar in 1925 I must have had his address. I wrote him right off. It seemed to me that he would want to meet me as much as I wanted to meet him. I thought we would fall into one another's arms. No answer. One day the mail brought a large violet box of Sherry candies with his card. This was my first year at Vassar; I was living in Maine where I had several friends among the students down the hall. Whenever they happened to come by my room I opened out the purple box with a certain pride, I must admit, as a poor foreign Student. Next day when I came back to my room the box was empty.

To finish with George Fitzmaurice. I made many attempts to see him with no results. When I became Mrs. Alfred Barr, wife of the Director of the Museum of Modern Art, I wrote him again, somehow implying that I had by now achieved a status that was not beneath him. Sure enough he answered, said that he was coming to the Waldorf for several days (brand new and elegant at that time) and that he would call me. We were living at 420 E 52 St. and at the lunch hour as I was crossing Park Ave going west I saw a man going east that, in a flash, I recognized as George Fitzmaurice. Rather portly, dressed in grey with incisive features. What can you do on an island in the middle of Park Ave. when the lights are changing? I went my way still hoping that he would phone as the period of his stay had not elapsed. That afternoon when I got home there was a box of yellow roses and a note saying that he'd been suddenly recalled to Hollywood

and was leaving on the 20th Century. Some years later his obituary caught my eye in the Times. Of course I wrote his widow. When she came through New York I went to call on her in one of those hidden houses behind Sutton Place under the Queensboro Bridge. She was an uninteresting woman rather cheaply vain but quite decent. She said that George had adored his mother and always spoke of her. There were two daughters; she showed me a photograph of herself in a chaise longue and the two little girls all frills and lace--what a strange last echo of Auntie Katie!

This wife gave copies of some or all of his films to the Film Library and just this year, 1971, I went at noon to see one. It was a ghastly concoction about gypsies in Spain. I couldn't stand more than 10 minutes.

So there are two daughters of George Fitzmaurice several years older than you, probably married and hard to trace.

But to return to Auntie Katie. Her husband, Basil Theophilidy died, quite unmourned, I'm sure, around 1912. This should have left her a wealthy widow but very shortly the Balkan war broke out, wiping out most of Theo's investments. Instead of salvaging whatever was left, Auntie Katie first tried her luck in Montecarlo (how often I was to hear of "Systems" and of gamblers so maniacal that they relieved themselves at the tables of roulette and trente et quarante rather than relinquish their seats). In Paris, having long been a customer of Worth, Paloma Poiret she wheedled them into giving her clothes to wear at the races and worldly gatherings as a sort of surreptitious advertisement,

then hastily, in partnership with a young woman named Paray SPERANZA Speraura, she copied them for ladies who wanted bootlegged models from the grandes maisons de couture.

She was still resorting to these somewhat shady devices when the First World War broke out. As the news from the trenches got gloomier and gloomier, and the Germans drew nearer, people began to leave Paris in droves.

In the course of her trying marriage Auntie Katie had often gone to Russia; her story of signaling a Russian train to stop in the middle of the countryside near Tsartoye Tselo is still one of my vivid memories of czarist Russia. Naturally she had Russian friends in Paris. When a family of intimates, having miraculously obtained train tickets, were departing for the Riviera, she went to the gare de Lyons to see them off. As they were waiting interminably for the wartime train to move the mother remembered that she had forgotten something. She sent off the cook to get it. Suddenly departure was announced, and as the cook had not returned, Auntie Katie jumped on the train just as she was.

By then the Côte d'Azur was no longer the rendezvous of the idle and the wealthy; the wounded, the exhausted were sent there to recuperate, the Zouaves from French Morocco and the Annamites from Indochina to recover from TB caused by the cold and mud of the trenches. Before her next trip to Rome Auntie Katie opened a tearoom in Menton which, I'm sure, became a refuge for the lonely. She was so gay, so warm, light-hearted and amusing. Her French had retained traces of an English accent but was very much of the moment full of Parisian argot and her English, like my mother's, was recognizably Irish, not in accent but because of certain quaint twists and expressions.

Things were at this point somewhere between 1914 and 1915, before Italy entered the war, when my grandfather took to his bed with what was obviously his terminal illness. He was in his mid-eighties. Hospitals in Rome were only for the indigent and a private clinic was too expensive. Auntie Elsie did most of the nursing and my mother spelled her whenever she could, but the hours of day and night duty were too long to endure indefinitely with such a demanding and irascible patient. Auntie Katie descended from France like an angel of mercy and fun.

There was no longer any maid, headquarters were in the kitchen across the corridor from the sickroom, the living room with the stove was miles away and not in use. Auntie Katie, always chilled, ran up a huge white wool wrapper that she wore day and night over her clothes. What a sight! A pile of red hair beautifully dyed and coiffed, rouge, perfect nails and that absurd monklike bathrobe that covered her from head to foot. She cooked the most delectable dishes and especially an apply charlotte, thoroughly irresistible when bubbling hot. Every time my grandfather's bell rang she'd have some quip as she hastened to his room. It seems heartless perhaps but it kept the three sisters going. It was part of the Fitzmaurice stiff-upper-lip. As time dragged on she got it into her head to tempt my grandfather with a supposedly healthful Russian beverage called koumis. She sealed many bottles of milk tightly and put them in the dark bathroom to ferment. At first we watched them anxiously awaiting some visible transformation. Then we forgot them. One afternoon as we were playing cards in the kitchen we heard loud pistolshots. All the bottles had exploded at once.

She had come to nurse and she went out only on two occasions, once at night in her bathrobe to get oxygen for my grandfather (what does it matter? they'll think I'm a monk) and once in the daytime to buy yellow satin, gold lace and minute silk rosettes. From Paris she had brought the best of a doll of Sèvres with a three-cornered hat. Out of wire she built and padded a crinoline and, stitch by stitch, produced a perfect Louis XV dress. It turned out to be a tea-cozy for my mother and we were still using it on the Wedgwood teapot when I left in 1925.

At the time of my grandfather's illness I was between 13 and 14; school was a good half hour away on the ~~Via~~ Corso Vittorio Emanuele with no bus or trolley connection. You walked there in the morning, then home for lunch, then back to school and finally out at 4:30 when it was already growing dark. That winter I'd run as fast as I could to the Via Tacito where Auntie Katie gave me tea at the kitchen table and taught me to play bézigue and crapette. They were easy games and as soon as I mastered them she insisted on playing for money. "Otherwise it's no fun," she said. My allowance was 20 centesimi a week plus 10 centesimi whenever I got marks of 9 or 10. I still see my father drawing the coins from his waistcoat pocket. We grambled away that money again and again but Auntie Katie always kept score and lent me money to go on and on. I fell deeper and deeper into debt but could not stop.

Mail often came for her from the front, mostly postcards, because they went faster through censorship. She showed me one with the Allied flags in lieu of a stamp. It was from a French officer, Charlie Denois and came to a close with the words: Je mets mes hommages à vos pieds et vous baise les mains."

Intoxicating words for a romantic reader of French novels.

Mornings if I had time I'd detour to the Via Tacito, ring the bell twice, she'd open, I'd hug ~~XX~~ her and run. Once with difficulty I curled my straight hair. In the darkness of the hall she saw it and exclaimed, "Ah womany womany!"

Many is the time I'd stolen into her frigid room to look over her cosmetics and her perfume bottles. I remember only l'Oregan and l'Emeraude de Coty which years after I chose as my perfume.

chapeter I on Auntie Katie, more to follow (1)

Auntie Katie I

My mother and I went to the smoky , smelly Stazione Termini to fetch her. She had auburn hair, a great black hat and a purse out of which she drew a piece of chocolate that tasted of tobacco. Soiled and exhausted by the immense trip she was ~~astonishing and awesome~~ lovely and gay as a lark.

She went to stay with grandpa and grandma and Auntie Elsie on the Via Maria Adelaide. She found her room too bare. She put up the oval mirror she always carried with her in her Vuitton trunks; she bought pink satin ribbon and made many many impeccable bows and pinned them here and there on the walls. Her room and her ~~aura was~~ were exquisitely perfumed, her dresses most complicated. I remember fastening countless little hooks and snaps first in the lining, then in the dress itself. She could not go out alone on the streets of Rome because then as now men pestered women. Often I was delegated to escort her, ~~holding her hand~~ though at the time I knew not why.

When she came to our house on the Via del Babuino 85 she always felt cold. I realized that ~~she had come to know my father~~ my father had called on her when he went through Paris on his business trips and while she was in no way patronizing she must have found him uninteresting. Nevertheless throughout she was always charming with him. I can still hear her say: " Ah Gino, vous avez grand air avec ce galurin" (this was the argot of the time for a hat).

On this first visit she gave me a bonbonnière she had carried from Paris. It was fashionable in those days to have elaborate candy boxes in the reception rooms of the house. This one, of heavy gilt porcelain was round and covered with life-size red and pink roses. Long after her death I broke the cover.

How to explain her charm? First of all she was beautiful and yet in a way familiar. She had the great Fitzmaurice nose ~~beautifully~~ admirably modelled and with the nob - it somehow drew up her upper lip as if with the force of its grandeur. Unlike most Irish mouths hers did not drop at the corners but turned up in a witty, warm, yet philosophical smile. Her eyes were very large and grey-blue

was either kind or convulsively funny. I never heard a harsh word from her. She loved to chat and with a twist of phrase, with a glance she could amuse. To me right off she spoke as an equal and a friend, the way no other adult ever had - she established an intimacy that I had never known with any one - she laughed and joked and patted and kissed me and squeezed my hand always as if she and I understood things that no others could.

What she felt about her parents is hard to tell. She was used to my grandfather's towering rages and to my grandmother's exaggerated piety. She was much closer to Auntie Elsie than to Mav, my mother, whose family nickname was May. Auntie Elsie in those early years often went to Paris to stay with her on the r. de l'Alboni (near the Trocadéro - the name of the street has been changed now) and they had a sisterly understanding that my mother did not share and of which she was jealous.

After this first visit Auntie Katie would send me presents from Paris, the Riviera or Marienbad where she always went for a cure. A doll's tea-set of painted wood, extraorinarily small yet impeccably painted with blue flowers, a dinner service for twelve with meats and vegetables on the prepaired dishes , a doll dressed as a school girl in a blue smock and long black stockings (still in Greensboro). For a doll that Auntie Elise always derided (nicknaming her Alberto Nathan, the then mayor of Rome) she made an exquisite dress of gossamer lightness with silk lace and a transparent pink petticoat (it is still in Greensboro and to see the stitches and their perfection brings you back to another age). From Marienbad, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire she sent a box labelled DELICATESSEN with minute hams, sausages and

.d haircuts. She sent the complete costume of the local peasant girls, red skirt, roidered apron, white linen blouse and huge necklace with coins of the Austro-garian empire.

How many postcards with her lovely sprawling hand-writing! I kept every one of them they were lost in Rome when my mother left the apartment in the Via Pierluigi da Pa-trina.

The next time she came my grandparents and Auntie Elsie had moved to Via Tacito 90 we had moved to Piazza della Libertá 10. In the first years there, before we put in tricity the front rooms were lit by gas and it was possible to attach to the .ng room chandelier a smelly black object that was supposed to emanate heat. How I iced! Auntie Katie would now be warm. No one at the time realized in our ly that heat rises. When we turned this stove on our faces got redder and redder our feet staid icy.

Like an angel Auntie Katie descended into the grandparents' new apartment and thrice the tiled floors were covered with red wall to wall carpeting and werful anthracite stove was installed in the front room to keep the old people snug. It was at this time, around 1911 or 1912 that a most unusual celebration took place. who had never gone to Via Tacito except for Sunday tea, were formally invited for 1. We dressed in our best. Auntie Katie looked dazzling in black chiffon lined ale pink, grandma wore her starched white tulle cap, grandpa his best black coat grey striped trousers. Only in later years did I realize that this must have been andparents' diamond wedding anniversary. At dessert with champagne Auntie Katie d Auntie Elsie a dainty box. It contained the diamond Toi et Moi ring.

The Ring.

Thus the poor Antigone got the diamonds for having given up her life as a painter ok after her parents. I doubt that she ever wore the ring; there were to be few ve occasions in her remaining life. Between 1913 and 1915 my grandmother succumbed teriosclerosis and senile insanity and my grandfather, after a long and infuriated ss, to some well-deserved live complaint.

Auntie Elsie moved to a studio in the Via Margutta where she hoped at long last to be able to paint. But the war fever was upon us all. Italy belatedly broke the Triple Alliance that had bound her to Austria and Germany and entered the First World War on the side of France and England in 1915. Auntie Elsie who had done so much nursing took a course and became an official British nurse (I think they were called VAC's) She was assigned to the only British Red Cross hospital on the Italian front. The address was Ospedale Villa Trento, San Giovanni di Manzana near Udine. When the Austrians broke through the Italian lines at Caporetto the hospital had to be evacuated and the wounded rapidly loaded into all available ambulances and cars. No transport was left for the doctors and nurses, they joined the great retreat on foot. Hemingway in Farewell to Arms described the crossing of the Tagliamento with men and vehicles spilling over the bridge into the river. Auntie Elsie crossed it carrying a little bag with some few belongings and the diamond ring. When she died in London in 1928 the ring came to me. By then I was at Vassar.

I met A. in the first exhibition of the Museum of Modern Art when its few exhibition galleries were on the 12th floor of the Hecksher building at 730 Fifth Ave., at the corner of 57th St. It was a coup de foudre and in May 1930 it became evident that we were going to marry. I explained to A. that I had this diamond ring, so unsuitable for a jeune fille and that I would now wear it as if he had given it to me. This I did but, following my mother's habits, I always took it off when I washed my hands.

In 1934 we went to Holland to collect the first van Gogh show. While still in Amsterdam we took a day trip to the Hague on an exploratory visit to Mme. Kröller-Müller whose many pictures we needed to borrow (they are now in the museum Otterloo). It was cold and rainy. In exhaustion we went to lunch at the Café Old Dutch which no longer exists after the bombings. After ordering I ran upstairs to wash. The water in the basin was warm. I scalped my frozen hands with relief and went back downstairs to join A.

As we sat, still waiting for the first course I glanced at my left and exclaimed: "Oh! my God! my ring!" I rushed back to the ladies' room but the ring was not on the glass shelf, not on the washbasin, not on the ~~filor~~. floor.

That night I couldn't sleep and wished and wished that I could scream and howl but those who cry in the movies rarely cry in real life.

A. most marvellously understood my trauma: it was not so much the ~~loss~~ loss of a precious jewel - by my nonchalance I had betrayed all my family, all my past.

We went to the American Consulate, we put ads in the local papers offering rewards. For van Gogh we staid the better part of a month but nothing happened.

Again and again the loss of the ring came over me in waves.

In the summer of 1935 I happened to be in Paris while A. was still in New York. Daily ~~Daily~~ I went to Chase Bank on the r. Cambon to get the mail and in the midst of casual letters there was a cable from A.: " Lost Ring found"

The woman who had picked it up at the Old Dutch had concealed it from her husband for nearly a year and later, overcome by guilt, had taken in to the American Consulate whence it was returned to Washington by pouch.

Auntie Katie

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	MSB	I.A.5

Auntie Elsie
Elizabeth Fitzmaurice

Auntie Katie must have had her photographed in Paris in this evening dress which I never saw.

Auntie Elsie was the youngest of all the Fitzmaurice girls. Tried desperately to be a painter. After death of her parents she became a British nurse, did the retreat of Caporetto; worked in map-room under admiral Beatie at end of 1st World War & died in London 1928 while I was at Vassar