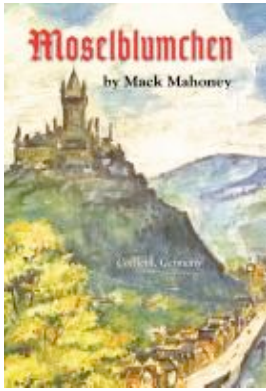


# Moselblumchen

The background of the cover is a painting. It depicts a large, dark stone castle with multiple towers and spires, perched on a steep, dark green cliff. Below the cliff, a river flows through a valley. The foreground is filled with lush green and yellow foliage, possibly grapevines. In the distance, rolling hills and a small town with red-roofed buildings are visible along the riverbank. The overall style is impressionistic with visible brushstrokes.

by Mack Mahoney

*Cochem, Germany*



***MOSELBLUMCHEN** is the biography about the amazing life of Stephanie Maddix, born in 1924, the daughter of a well-to-do aristocratic German Family. She grew struggling through World War II and, after the war, migrated to the United States to marry a soldier she barely knew. She then became a successful cattle rancher, retiring at 32 to travel the world, and ending up a millionaire philanthropist.*

## **Moselblumchen**

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# **THE MOSELBLUMCHEN**

**A True Story of a Life Well-Lived**

**Mack Mahoney**

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to Stephanie Maddix, whom I had the privilege of loving for 25 wonderful years.



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**PART ONE –  
GERMANY**



## COCHEM

Cochem is a small village in the heart of German wine country. It's an idyllic German town with a storybook-like setting, where window boxes overflow with bright flowers adorning black-timber-designed facades of steep-roofed houses charmingly arrayed along narrow, cobblestone lanes. Atop a big hilltop is a castle overlooking this quaint, picturesque place.

Cochem nestles gently up to the winding Mosel River (it is called the Moselle in France where it originates) flowing past countless vineyards rippling across rolling hills and valleys which cut between the Eifel mountains on the northwest and the Hunstruk on the southeast. Life along the river moves at a tranquil pace through old riverside towns like Cochem that have towering castles atop promontories, and terraced vineyards climbing the surrounding hills. In the fertile river valley, many family-owned wineries grow the acclaimed and famous Mosel grapes. The Mosel majestically wanders some 150 miles through France, Germany, and Luxemburg. A paved, two-lane road closely parallels the winding river, occasionally crossing from one side to the other. In Cochem, weeping willows beguilingly dangle alongside a grassy riverside promenade that ambles beside the beautiful Mosel.

Most of the steeply terraced vineyards face the south in order to catch the full warmth of the sun. Rhine wine is considered excellent because the local slate terrain absorbs the heat of the sun and remains warm during the nights, resulting in a sweeter wine. Grapes grown on the steep sides of the slopes are not as easy to grow and harvest, making them tasty, yet more expensive. The Mosel Wine Road zigzags its way from Koblenz, where the Mosel River intersects the Rhine to Trier near the Luxemburg border.

It's a land of folk tales and old myths, where peasants and nobility rub shoulders and forested hillsides enjoy all four seasons of mother nature's splendor. The area was initially founded by the

Romans in the century before Christ. It's a place that an ancient time ago was originally populated by the Celts. Roman soldiers fought for control, and Julius Caesar once ruled until defeated in 9 A.D. by a Teutonic warrior named Hermann. Then came the tribes of Bavarians, Alemanni, Goths, Burgundians, Saxons, Thuringians, Franks, and the Vandals. For over a thousand years there were Holy Roman Emperors, kings and elected rulers. In 1841, the German nation came into existence by virtue of a constitution known as the Reichstag or Reich. Each of these dynasties left some of their cultural footprints behind, and the area literally overflows with historical landmarks.

Cochem is on the "Route Des Vins," or the Wine Road to France, with the stunning Mosel River running from Trier to Koblenz. Travelers can follow the river's gradual descent, as it flows toward Koblenz, where the Mosel meets the Rhine. The Mosel Valley and the Rhine Valley are similar, but the Mosel is slightly less traveled, a bit quieter and perhaps more authentic. Like the Rhine, Mosel Valley hills are covered with grape vineyards and topped by Middle Aged castles with ancient ruins. The small quaint villages along the way consist of old timber-framed houses, often situated around a central church with a bell tower. Most churches date to the 16th century. The surrounding countryside is not only enchanting, but also peacefully serene.

At every small village along the way there are rest stops where visitors relax at outdoor tables overlooking the entrancing Mosel River. There are shadowed, narrow curving streets that typically converge onto little town squares where vendors sell their wares, and the townsfolk used to come to get their water. Practically every vista is overwhelmingly beautiful. Geraniums and Pansies reside in window boxes and wildflowers are in the meadows. Blossoms dangle from almost every window along the shop fronts and squares. It is a fascinating area with both French and German influences.

Most of the people there are descendents of long time residents, and can trace their history back for many generations. They and their ancestors were born there and never left. There was a time of more recent history when two brothers, the forefathers of Herr Alois Bayer made occupational choices. One ventured into pharmaceuticals and the other, the great great grandfather of Alois, chose textiles and clothing.

Like every available man his age, Alois was involuntarily drafted into the Great War, and forced into the military when Germany declared war on Russia in 1914. He proudly wore the uniform of his nation's Army. During the war he became friends with General Werner Von Reichenau and other important military leaders. He tasted the mud of many German fields, crawling on his belly, inching his way along muddy furrows for miles to avoid snipers. He hunkered facedown in trenches as machine guns shattered the air above him and artillery shells exploded in the smoke filled sky.

He experienced first hand the gruesome realities of holding the line, and the endless fighting to gain small bits of ground; only to surrender it in retreat against overwhelming odds. He felt the sting of burnt nostrils from the poison gas that swept across the no-man's land of those bloody battlefields. He saw his troops devastated by fierce attacks...saw arms and legs blown off... decapitated heads... entrails spilled over the ground, and inhaled the noxious odors of blood and battlefield wound treatments.

He was promoted to the rank of Captain because of his education and political standing in the community. Unlucky during the war, he was captured by the Russians in 1919 in a battle near Stalingrad, (then called Tsareitsyn) near the Volga River. He was sent to a prison camp in Siberia, where he endured years of torturous existence, surviving by his intelligence and determination to return to his home and life in Germany.

Amazingly, through a complicated plot and some lax oversight by his captors, he escaped from the prisoner of war camp along with several other prisoners. They fled in the dark of night into the Russian countryside, and traveled for many days across the rugged Russian landscape. They lived on whatever food they could scrounge up and survived by sheer will power and the ability to adapt. They stole chickens and eggs from farmers, ate whatever raw vegetables and fruit they could find, and against all odds managed to miraculously avoid being recaptured.

They took shelter in caves, ravines, hid in the cover of brush, woodlands, or whatever sanctuary they could find during most of the day. They traveled cautiously across the rugged barren landscape at night. Every mile became another harrowing undertaking. There was no particular leader, and everyone had their own idea of how to proceed. The consensus was that they stood a better chance traveling alone. Therefore, one by one the small group splintered apart until Alois eventually found himself alone, hundreds of miles from Germany, with no money, no food, and no identification.

He sought refuge just before dawn one morning in a loft inside a farmers barn. In the best accommodations he experienced since escaping, he collapsed into a deep sleep behind stacks of hay. He was aroused hours later by the sounds of muffled screams from a woman. In the barn below, five Bolshevik soldiers were in the process of cruelly raping a helpless young woman. Remaining concealed, Alois grimaced, but without a weapon knew he could not prevent the horrible savage act being committed below him.

When the brutality was over and the soldiers left, he climbed down to find the battered woman's lifeless body, stripped naked, bloodied, and covered in filth. It looked to him as if she were about six months pregnant. That incident and image was one that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

He journeyed for weeks, until he eventually stumbled onto a railroad track, following that track into the nearest town. He managed to sneak on board a parked train during the night, and hid beneath one of the seats in a passenger car. He spoke no Russian and wasn't even sure where the train was going. Throughout a long train ride he remained undetected for two days and three nights, while unknowing passengers sat just above him. The train ended up in Switzerland, where he managed to disembark unnoticed. From there, he made his way safely back home to Germany, arriving in a state of shock. Having been through Hell on Earth, he looked like a half starved and walking corpse. Devastatingly thin and in very poor health, it took him a long time to recover.

Surviving such a terrible war took its toll, and Alois was a changed man. He wanted no more of such extreme brutality by so-called civilized men. Done with bravery and heroics, he felt most fortunate to return to his place of birth.

The Great War was known as “the war to end all wars,” yet to him it was a huge disappointment and calamity. The Iron Cross awarded him upon his return was of little merit to him now. Like all war worn soldiers, he sacrificed enough, and now simply wants to live life and enjoy his family.

In Cochem, during the spring of 1927, on a cool, sunlit morning in a pastoral green meadow, a happy, cherubic toddler rides straddling Alois's strong shoulders. She giggles in pure delight and throws her arms up toward the warming sun, waving them like a bird in flight. Alois Stephan Bayer, born 20 November, 1890 in this quaint German village, recently made the mayor elect of Cochem, former Captain and survivor of The Great War... wholeheartedly...now resumes his customary social, civic, and aristocratic life.

The pink-cheeked, little girl he carries on his shoulders is his beloved daughter Stephanie, Huberta, Mathilde, Bayer... named after

her father's two sisters and himself. Stephanie, is the apple of his eye. She in turn adores him, and is delighted to be atop his strong shoulders. As they come to a patch of bright yellow flowers, he gently lifts her up and swings the child in a circle causing her to giggle ecstatically. He sets her down, and she staggers, pretending to be dizzy for his amusement. He laughs and strolls on ahead of her.

She appears to spot something and bends down, her eyes almost touching the wild flowers. Alois pauses, noticing her face is just above the ground. "At what are you looking, Liebchen?" he casually asks.

The little girl turns her smiling face toward him. "The Mosel Blumchen's, Papa," she replies, referring to the wild flowers growing beside the Mosel. A grim look appears on his face, and suddenly he wonders if his daughter is going blind.

The little girl does not notice his concern, as she again lowers her face to peer at the flowers. With a frown on his face, he's amazed he hasn't noticed his daughter's near-sightedness before. She is such a happy child and never complains. An extreme sadness overcomes him, but he tries not make her aware of it. He's been so busy trying to keep the family in their pre-war lifestyle that this important detail and discovery about her failing eyesight eluded him.

"Nein! Dine ist, Moselblumchen," he laughs, as he swoops her up and swings her, causing her to squeal in delight. He sets her on his shoulders again and begins heading home, wondering how much of this beautiful country his daughter is actually able to envision.

A short time later, as they near home the aroma of fresh-baked bread manages to take his mind off the discovery. His wife Else, who is ill with tuberculosis, takes tea with her friend Herr Melcean Bach, and he feels there's no need to cause her alarm at this time.



After dinner when they are alone, he tells her. Alois considers himself most fortunate to have her as his mate. The former Maria Elizabeth Snitzler, of Duren, Germany comes from a well-to-do aristocratic family. At first, they were not all that keen on his betrothal to her, considering him beneath their cultural and social status. However, a proud Alois reminded them that he comes from a long line of hard working and successful Bayers who have been in the men's clothing business in Cochem for well over a hundred years. The fact that a distant cousin is the Bayer of "Bayer Aspirin" means little to them at the time.

Alois makes sure that Elese spends her days in luxury and comfort. She is a well-educated and highly intellectual lady of leisure, spending most of her time reading, smoking cigarettes, and sipping tea in the elegant surroundings of their luxurious three-story home above the clothing store. She cares little about the many tourist activities, garden parties, fancy dress balls, medieval banquets, or other goings on in their small town. Instead Elese oversees the maid staff, choosing the meal menus, and vociferously reading in her favorite chair.

Although a social person, Elese has a limited number of acquaintances. One is her dear friend, Herr Anton Melzenbach, a wine-maker who owns a number of vineyards. His mansion overlooks the Mosel, and he calls upon Elese practically every day at the same time. It's widely known that he's a good friend of the great General Erwin Rommel, who often visits him in Cochem. On his visits, he and Elese sit and sip tea, discussing things of interest to only the two of them... such as who got married, had a child, moved away, got a promotion, or did something outrageous. Alois considers Herr Melzenbach a very formal man that is always polite. He's never even once heard Herr Melzenbach call his wife by her first name. She is Frau Bayer to him, and he is Herr Melzenbach to her. That's just the way it is.

With his wife busy, and no customers to attend, Alois decides to do some inventory in his store. Wandering down the street, Little Stephanie plays with Adda, the family's German Shepard. She knows the little town well, having wandered its cobblestone streets enough to be known by every citizen. They all greet her, often stopping to pinch her rosy cheeks or pinch her chubby little behind. Due to her outgoing personality and friendliness, she's like the town mascot. That her father is the town mayor and one of its most distinguished citizens doesn't hurt her status either.



Stephanie's mother and father - Elese and Alois Bayer



Baby Stephanie and her mother Else and brother Ludwig

## MUNICH

In nearby Munich, a city founded more than a thousand years before Christ, a young man is about to make a speech. Coincidentally, this man's father is also named Alois. Although peace is at hand, there are lingering grievances from the surrender and armistice finalized with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June of 1919. Immense debts from the so-called Great War leave a war-weary Germany in a state of social and economic turmoil. This horrific, vicious mayhem results in over forty million casualties, and brings literal devastation to Europe. Most people consider it to be the war to end all wars.

Many Germans die in the war. Hunger and destitution prevail, and the surviving, poverty stricken, enraged populace is restless. In an effort to punish Germany, the harshly punitive Versailles Treaty redefines territories, giving much former German land to France, Belgium and Denmark. It also establishes the new state of Poland. It limits Germany's armed forces to 100,000 soldiers, with no tanks, U-boats, or air force. The massive reparations are overwhelming. Germany's required to pay its adversaries one hundred twenty-one billion marks in fifty-nine yearly payments. The mark's value falls to the point of four trillion to each American dollar. Thus, it takes a basketful of German currency to buy a simple loaf of bread. It has a devastating affect on every German citizen. Rampant inflation, coupled with an ongoing worldwide depression creates suffering beyond the nation's tolerance to endure it.

In a large Munich stadium, the excited crowd gathers to hear this charismatic, working class man speak. Born in the small Austrian city of Braunau near the German border, he comes from a humble lineage. His father Alois worked as a custom's official and his mother Klara worked as his father's maid before their marriage.

Alois was a brutal controlling man that wed twice before marrying Klara. Both previous wives died from tuberculosis. From

those earlier marriages, Alois sired two children; a son named Alois junior, and a daughter called Angela. By his marriage to, Klara he sired three more children, all who regrettably died in infancy. However, despite that heartbreak, in 1889 they eventually had another child...named Adolph. He was sickly, but survived. After Adolph, they went on to have another son named Edmond, and then a daughter name Paula.

Adolph longed to be an artist in his youth. For a while he was a homeless vagabond, living on the streets of Vienna. He joined the army in 1914 and was courier in a unit that fought in a number of engagements. He was a good soldier, received a serious leg wound, and once was temporarily blinded during a British gas attack. He was presented the Iron Cross-First Class, and wore it proudly upon his discharge as a corporal.

He moved to Munich just before the Great War where he joined the tiny German Worker's Party. The angry, young man became the leader and found his calling in speaking to the public. He surges into the public eye by bringing the promise of a better future.

With Roman-like pageantry, wailing trumpets silence the crowd, and loud drums precede Storm Troopers waving flags with swastikas surrounding a wreath with eagles. The young man they've all come to see steps forwards and slowly begins to speak in a high, but serious voice. He has no manuscript, and yet his words mesmerize the crowd. His intensity builds with rising and falling emotions, and his flailing arms exaggerate gestures. His words bestow in them an emotion of pride. The crowd is fascinated and reacts with seemingly hypnotic enthralment to the wild-eyed, arm-waving orator. In awe, they wonder — could this be the beginning of the New Germany?

Germany barely survives WW I, and by the late nineteen twenties Adolph Hitler proves to be a masterful politician. His firey oratorical ability appeals to the raw passions of the citizenry, which are severely sapped by severe social and economic problems. He is a

charismatic demagogue and impressive public speaker, especially when he boldly proclaims the wonders of the German racial and historical destiny, while angrily denouncing Marxists and Jews. He portrays them as the scapegoats for Germany's defeat and the reason for its economic problems.

Hitler's Nazi party evolves quickly. The word "Nazi" is an abbreviation for Nationalisozialismus, or the (Nationalist Socialism Party). Along with Nazism, the SS, or Schutzstaffel (protective unit), is created, as is the Luftwaffe (air force). Germany's surrender in World War I cost the country dearly. In addition to losing all military pride and paying out extremely high reparations, they lose 1.7 million men, cede much territory, colonies, and their right to have a military. The economy now is in shambles, and the government consists of many different political factions, all-striving to regain control over the once powerful country.

At the time, most Germans are disgruntled and apathetic toward this new democracy. Realizing the people lack the will power or determination to withstand another crises, Hitler slowly and craftily fabricates the necessary enemies to secure the required German votes. However, in 1929, unemployment is rampant with three million Germans out of work. Hitler's future seems dim, and for him to move forward requires a national disaster to recover. He gets the break he needs with the deepening worldwide depression. The stock market crash in the United States sends the already staggering German economy over the edge.

By 1930, there are about six million unemployed in Germany, and ten different political parties garner a million votes or more. New elections are called, and a poised Hitler makes his move. His idealistic promises, incessant propaganda machine, and rabid speeches arouse the masses. The Nazi Party prevails, acquiring over six million votes and significantly increasing Hitler's governmental influence. It takes him two and a half more years to achieve his political goal...becoming Chancellor of Germany.

Germany's political process is a puzzling, complicated arrangement wherein the people vote for a President, who is then nominated as the Chancellor, their leading politician. This is normally the leader of the party controlling the majority of seats in the Reichstag. When the elections of 1932 are over, the Nazis control 238 of the 608 seats in the Reichstag. Hitler then forces Chancellor Hindenburg to resign, which results in Adolph becoming the new Chancellor of Germany.

By then, it's pretty much understood by most rational Germans that Der Fuhrer is a psychopathic personality who rejects all conventional and moral standards. He clearly reveals this in his book "Mein Kampf," and via various prejudiced speeches, playing upon the concept that Aryans are the master race entitled to dominate others, especially the antagonistic, Nazi-hated Jews. He believes that the state has the right to use any means necessary to achieve his ends. He boldly claims that the German people have the right to Lebensraum (space for living), and should employ any means necessary to gain domination and influence over all of Europe.



## A WIDE-EYED CHILD

Stephanie is a happy child, self-possessed, courteous and very likable. She's her own playmate, practically raising herself while her father takes care of the family textile business. Her often-ill mother mostly drinks tea and smokes cigarettes.

After being provided with eyeglasses, the world begins to open up for Stephanie. She wanders the cobblestone streets in the company of her various pets. They include the German Shepard, Adda... Struppi, Mosco, and Borshi, who are feisty wire-haired terriers... a friendly Billy goat... and her pet tortoise Gretelchen, brought from Greece as a gift by her father.

She often hooks the goat up to a small cart, like a horse to a carriage, as they ramble around the cobblestone streets and explore the densely dark-forested woodlands of the Rhineland. Other times she has the terriers in the basket of her bike, as she peddles joyfully about exploring and curious about the splendid magical place in which she is growing up. The pleasures are hers alone, and seem more than enough to satisfy her. She's familiar with every nook and cranny of the village's historic places. She strolls through the archways of stone streets, past the shops, galleries and restaurants where centuries of Gothic and Renaissance Baroque blend with the medieval remnants of past civilizations. The narrow streets, painted walls, and red-roofed buildings are her playground.

While her four year older brother, Ludwich, tends to be pensive and meditative, Stephanie's battery is always fully charged. She's a talker... an extremely friendly child... known and loved by everyone she encounters, and they all greet her warmly, taking pleasure in her happiness. Her "stop and chats" become somewhat legendary with the locals, who know she is sincere, caring, and always ready to give or take advice from anyone she meets. She and her ensemble become a familiar sight, as she clambers through the light-filtered, small narrow streets, stopping to tête-à-tête with almost everyone. To her,

there are no strangers, for her bubbling personality endears her to one and all.

Her playground is vast, including the family owned vineyards below the Gothic-style Reichsburg Castle, perched dramatically above the small village of Cochem at 180 meters above sea level. It overlooks the scenically beautiful, slow moving Mosel River. The castle was initially built as a defensive fortress commanding the surrounding river valleys. It is flanked by moss covered walls and an ancient tower overlooking the river. The huge and majestic structure originally built from the rubble left in a frenzy of destruction by French troops over 300 years ago in 1689, was purchased in 1868 for a pittance, and then proudly restored to it's fullest glory by Louis Ravene' - a rich Berliner.

The Huguenot Louis Ravene' was a Berlin Privy Councillor and a leading industrialist. He made his money from the iron industry, and initially came to Cochem to sell some railway equipment. The rumor around Cochem is that he got drunk one night and ended up owning the castle, for which he paid only 1000 Dutchemarks. Once he owned it, he then used every available stone from the ruins to rebuild it exactly as it was in old plans dated 1576. It is only accessible from one side, which is the side nearest the town. However, there is also a path up behind the castle that ends at the Bayer family's private garden, which is carved into the hillside just below the castle walls overlooking Cochem.

Stephanie knows the mysterious castle to be full of intrigue, controversy, and is a part of the world to which she has no invitation. She's heard from her father and other adults about it having forty-three rooms, with a secret button and a door in a paneled room that will suddenly fly open to reveal a hidden passage. No one seems to know where or to what the tunnel leads. She's also heard it said that the castle has beautiful carved wooden furniture, exquisite paintings, 17<sup>th</sup> century wall panels, lots of oriental vases, and many weird lamps that are supposed to frighten off evil spirits.

The castle was built over a 1000 years ago and used by some Palatine Counts. One of them was disliked by everyone and nicknamed the Garlic King. He was killed right in front of the castle in 1088. To young Stephanie it is dark and mysterious, a stony hulk of ancient history looming large over her little village. She has only experienced very brief admittance to the rambling ramparts of the luxurious private residence.

She is much more familiar with the path winding up to the castle from behind, which leads through the grape terraces of the Bayer vineyards. They have been owned by the family for many years. The trail through the vineyards lead to the Bayer's private garden, niched into the landscape just below the ramparts of the castle walls. In that green-grassed garden area, there is a bench, chairs, and a small comfortably furnished glass-walled greenhouse-like building that she loves to play in. She thinks of that building as her own small home away from home.

When she is not wandering around with her cart, she's often busy in her father's store. Her imagination is always in play, and she takes great interest in every aspect of her father's business, envisioning herself as both an official spokesperson and sales official in the store. She speaks boldly and persuasively to every customer, complimenting him or her on how fine they look in whatever garment they might be considering. She feels prideful when someone makes a purchase and her father takes a great deal of satisfaction in having her show such an interest in the family business.

When she learns how to look at the cash-register tape to calculate how much business has been done, she often points out how successful they've been that day to her father. He is usually patient, nods, and smiles. When her father is busy talking to a customer or one of the supply goods venders, and other sales clerks are busy, little Stephanie steps in to take charge and become the salesgirl. Thus, she boldly represents the business in a proud and effective manner.

Stephanie's brother Ludwich has little or no interest in performing such menial tasks. He's always too busy with his own friends, or pursuing some intellectual pastime to take an interest in their store. That doesn't go unnoticed by Stephanie's father, but there seems little he can do about it. Ludwich considers it beneath him to associate with Stephanie's younger friends, and though Stephanie idolizes her older brother, he seems cold and distant to her, and she doesn't at all understand his behavior. Though his aloofness hurts her deeply, she's come to expect and accept it. She often hears her parents tell of when Ludwich got his first look at newly born Stephanie. He clearly stated his disdain and ordered his parents to take her back.

Eventually Stephanie becomes familiar with the cash register and value of the money therein. As soon as she discovers it can buy her things, little Stephanie takes a strong liking to money. She even has her favorite places to spend it. There's the candy store around the corner. There, she knows a certain clerk that always gives her more of the broken pieces of peppermint candy that are her favorite. Then there's the butcher shop where she buys a tasty bratwurst and some bread, the ice cream store that serves her preferred vanilla, or the produce stand where the fruit's deliciously ripe.

Stephanie always politely asks her father if she can have a little money to go and buy a treat. She asks so often, that Alois is finally tired of the game and gives Stephanie permission to go into the register to take a small amount of money anytime she wants. As far as Stephanie is concerned, his generous gesture opens the door to a perfect world. She's graduated to trustworthiness in the eyes of her father. Thus begins her battle against heaviness and from her extravagance a fight in the life-long battle of weight control.

Utilizing her God-given gift of innate charm, little Stephanie may smile and sweet talk her father out of another portion of meat at mealtime, or she might convince a customer that a particular coat makes them look extremely handsome. She applies this social ploy

enthusiastically to most every task, often voluntarily taking on chores that others might shun.

Without anyone asking, she decides to become the best cherry vendor at the Cochem produce market. She proudly situates herself in front of the cherry stand, proclaiming to all that there are no worms in her cherries. She confidently states that anybody finding a worm in one of her cherries will be given a thousand marks. The sheepish owner watches as the unpaid little Stephanie sells her cherries. People often stop to buy some cherries just for the privilege of dealing with her.

Once inside their three-story home, on the other side of the bronze-cast solid-door with its rectangular bas-relief panel, visitors to the Bayer family find themselves in the warm confines of the men's clothing store. A doorway from there opens to a foyer, where a rounded colonnade leads one up the stairs. The family resides on the second or main floor, which contains their primary living area. This consists of the bedrooms, library, kitchen, and bathrooms. The maids occupy the third level, which has their smaller bedrooms, laundry facilities, various supply rooms, cupboards, and the servants' bathrooms. There is a large basement with the furnace, as well as shelving for storage of things that they might need later, including supplies for sale in the store.

Just inside the vestibule leading to the second floor there stands a small table which holds some glasses and a very fine bottle of highly intoxicating Jagermeister liqueur. The alcohol's kept there as a friendly gesture in order to wet the whistle and warm the innards of anyone entering from the cold German air. It is routinely maintained and restocked as needed by the maids.

Little Stephanie does not know anything about alcohol, much less of the dramatic effects such a strong and potent drink might have on a young child. However, she's seen her father take a drink from the bottle, so on a whim she decides to emulate his action. The liquor

is sweet and warms her tummy. In fact, she likes it so much she becomes “a frequent flyer” visiting that bottle quite often... sometimes several times in a day.

No one ever sees her glub... glub... glubing... the liquor, and so far as she knows...no one ever questions why those bottles kept evaporating. The maids figure the adults are imbibing, and neither Alois nor Elese ever know about it. The maids replenish the bottles from the stock in the basement, and the head housekeeper reorders the Jagermeister as needed to replenish the supply.

In her own quiet way, for a number of years little Stephanie’s a happy child due to the development of her acquired taste for the sweet beverage. Many years later, Stephanie confesses this fact to her mother, Elese is shocked and surprised to hear her precious, little daughter was once a preteen-alcoholic.

Elese loves both her children dearly, but she is not one to dote over them, preferring to let them do as they will. Elese never disciplines Stephanie or raises her voice in anger at her, although the two do often talk and go for walks together. They have many things in common, and laugh at things they think are ridiculous. Stephanie enjoys being around her mother, who dishes out her affection in small doses. When they’re together Stephanie often clowns, making faces when a person’s back is turned, and pointing out little things the two of them think are funny or interesting. They often stroll arm in arm along the riverfront together, which become some of Stephanie fondest childhood memories.

Unlike Elise, Stephanie’s father is a stern disciplinarian who seldom loses control of his emotions. If they foul up, he has no qualms about correcting the sales girls, the maids, or Stephanie with a brash warning...but a few minutes later all is forgotten. Once however, he gets angry with Stephanie over some minor thing, and orders her down to the celler as punishment. He then got busy and forgets about her.

The basement is not a fun place to spend any amount of time. There's the coal bin, where dark lumps are stored before being fed into the furnace to heat the home. There are crates of apples, kegs of wine, and various supplies for the business and home. It is a damp, lonely place, but Stephanie endures her punishment bravely. For countless hours she wonders when she will be permitted back upstairs. Several hours later, her father finally misses her. He casually asks one of the salesgirl's where is Stephanie. They remind him that he sent her to the basement. Tears form in his eyes, and he feels ashamed and embarrassed. He immediately rushes to the basement to retrieve her, and never again sends her there as punishment.

On another occasion, Stephanie becomes disenchanted with how things are going in her young life and decides to run away. To stock up for the trip, she buys two sandwiches from the butcher, some pieces of peppermint, and heads out of town. She gets as far as a neighbor's yard where she begins playing with their dog. She shares the sandwiches with the dog, which also helps her eat all her peppermint. On a whim, she climbs into the doghouse with the animal, where they both fall asleep. In the meantime, word goes out that little Stephanie is missing, so frantic search parties are sent out to find her. They look high and low, until at long last someone discovers her contentedly sleeping in that doghouse with the dog.

Stephanie has little knowledge about boys... except they seem strange. Her brother never wants to play with her, choosing instead to go off with friends his own age. She's often left alone in her own little make believe world, where she thrives on the beauty and wonder of nature, animals, and the kindness of strangers. She's such a friendly and likable little girl that when she passes people on the street, almost everyone smiles politely and inquires as to her health and happiness. Many of the locals enjoy pinching her on the butt, or cheek. She always beams and responds that she is doing quite well.

Each school day she marches up the hill to the all-girl Catholic school where the nuns teach her how to be a proper and faithful German girl. She learns things like Homemaking, French and English, but especially good manners. The nuns are stern disciplinarians, and anyone disobedient receives a quick slap on the wrist with a ruler. Stephanie doesn't much like school, but tolerates it because she has no other option.

She makes friends with several girls. Amely Vonderbeck becomes her favorite and a best friend for life. Amely's small, lithe, and full of life. Like Stephanie, she is sometimes mischievous and conniving, always encouraging Stephanie to overcome her hesitations and perform some outrageous act. In turn, Stephanie often instills within Amely courage and inspiration, and they become inseparable and totally supportive of each other.

Once they go to a gypsy fortuneteller that is passing through with a traveling carnival. For a small fee, she predicts they will both marry rich and successful men from another country. They hope it will be so.

Amely has affluent, well-to-do parents that own a hotel on the West side of the Mosel. When together there, the girls constantly talk about boys and giggle. They speak about the many curious things little girls talk about. They spend lots of time planning for the future and thinking about men. They know that babies came from a mother's stomach... but aren't sure exactly how? Their peer group unanimously decides, after much debate, that babies are made when a boy pees in the same toilet after a girl has pee'd in it without flushing. They never speak to an adult that corrects this theory. There is no sex-education in Germany at that time, and certainly not much intimate mingling among the sexes until their mid-teenage years.

As the years pass and Stephanie changes from a precocious little girl into a young woman, she knows very little about the quiet storms brewing or the suffering indignations the German people incur as a



consequence of the reparations imposed upon them after World War I. There are rumors, and she hears adults complain about the state of political turmoil, but for Stephanie life moves forward without a true awareness of her nation's strife.

Budding trees turn green and blooming flower-filled meadows with active songbirds advance into summers of slow moving rivers and halcyon days. For Stephanie, these are sweet days of swimming in the Mosel and enjoying picnics in the family garden just below the Reichburg Castle. Each idyllic summer then gives way to a windy autumn, and the clinging leaves lose their hold and scatter in the brisk fall winds. The autumnal Mosel extravaganza transforms green leaves into the color of sunsets, and during walks there is the unmistakable sound of the crackle of crunching leaves beneath Stephanie's feet.

The blaze of war snakes across the German countryside like demonic shadows, making the air tepid even when the snow falls quietly over the bucolic countryside. Mosel currents slow to a crawl as chunks of ice form and then come to a stop. For Stephanie and her friends, it becomes ice-skating time again.

Christmas time is bleak... when the sun, if it shines at all, climbs only partway into the southern sky casting long shadows even at midday. The frigid winds turn fingers numb, as they continuously ripple coats and nip at cold-reddened noses. In their home, for Stephanie's family, cozy winter nights are spent beside a gleaming fireplace. As the seasons come and go, and with the war and rumors of Germany's plight, Stephanie inevitably evolves from a cherubic, happy child into a precocious and curious teenager. She plays with her turtle and dreams about the future.



The toddler Moselblumchen

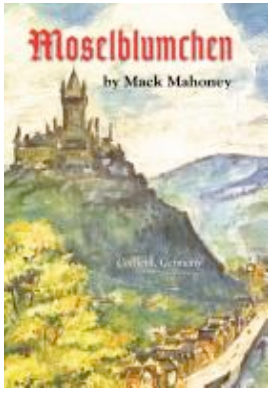
*Moselblumchen*



The little swinger Stephanie at age 4



(Stephanie and brother Ludwig)



***MOSELBLUMCHEN** is the biography about the amazing life of Stephanie Maddix, born in 1924, the daughter of a well-to-do aristocratic German Family. She grew struggling through World War II and, after the war, migrated to the United States to marry a soldier she barely knew. She then became a successful cattle rancher, retiring at 32 to travel the world, and ending up a millionaire philanthropist.*

## **Moselblumchen**

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