The family of E.M. Jellinek: Documenting a history

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This is the third in a series of papers depicting the mostly undocumented life of E.M. Jellinek. This paper investigates Jellinek’s family history from a genealogical perspective using popular resources from the field. The author points out the potential connections and influences of Jellinek’s notable and distinguished family as related to the little known period of Jellinek’s early life. The information in these papers was first presented at the 36th Annual Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS) Conference on May 1st, 2014, by seven presenters in a panel entitled “Mystery and speculations: Piecing together E.M. Jellinek’s redemption.”

Since beginning our investigations on E.M. Jellinek at the Center of Alcohol Studies, the research has, more often than not, yielded more questions than answers. He was clearly a charismatic and brilliant man, who was able to adapt his interests and abilities to any given situation. Why pursue his family as a particular research interest? In researching his family history, we hoped to uncover clues as to how Jellinek came to command such
abilities, as well as people that may have helped him between the time he left Budapest in the early 1920s and arrived at Worcester State Hospital nearly a decade later. Hopefully, our research can add to the previously documented Jellinek family history, such as Kempter (1998) and Kelemen and Márk (2013).

Previous research had discovered enough to know that there were the three core figures with which we could begin our research. Morton’s father was Erwin Marcel Jellinek of Budapest. The Jellinek family was affluent and well connected. As a young man, Marcel was an actor and theatre manager in Germany before moving to New York. Morton’s mother was notable soprano Marcella Lindh (born Rose Jacobson), who sang with John Philip Sousa’s band. Letters from family members also indicated that Morton had a sister named Edna, but no birthdate is mentioned in these letters. The most promising starting point for exploring Morton’s family was his mother, given her status as a notable public figure in her time.

The first source of information that I used was the Google news archive and Google Books search. I searched using all three of her well-known aliases: Rose Jacobson, Rose Jackson and Marcella Lindh. The most results appeared for “Marcella Lindh”, primarily reviews of performances in which she was included or announcements of upcoming singing engagements.

The majority of the results was from 1890-95, when the family was still living in New York City and Marcella was engaged with the Sousa band and several shows at the Metropolitan Opera. The only contemporary descriptive account that could be found of her singing appeared in a published diary of Alma Mahler-Werfel, the widow of Joseph Mahler, who saw Rose perform (Mahler, 1999).

There are virtually no results for Rose Jacobson or Jackson that match, and none at all for Marcella or Rose Jellinek. Searches for Marcel Jellinek show that he made a career change, owning a printing business with a relative of his wife (The Etude, 1890); advertisements for Jellinek & Jacobson Publishers appeared in several newspapers. He is also listed as a business manager for a theater in downtown Manhattan. Mentions of Marcel and Rose become scarce after moving back to Europe in the mid-1890s.
The CAS archives contain letters written from Thelma Pierce Anderson, Jellinek’s likely second wife, to Mark Keller at the Center of Alcohol Studies. Thelma’s letters make mention of other family members, such as Johanna Fuchs, Morton’s maternal grandmother, with whom he was very close. They also make the first mention of any of Rose’s relatives, an Aunt Elsie in New York City, and that the family name may have been changed to Jackson at some point (Anderson to Keller, 1988). Searches for Elsie Jackson or Jacobson on Google news did not turn up any promising information. Thelma’s letters are invaluable in that they relay some anecdotal and charming stories about the Jellinek family, mostly relating to Morton’s youth in Hungary. Information about his parents and sister can also be sifted from her letters. One excerpt gives us an important clue that Rose and Edna returned from Europe to the United States sometime during Thelma and Morton’s marriage. The letters are relatively short of information on Morton’s life after his departure from Budapest. We do not know if he simply never told her any details about his life during that time, or if she chose to omit them. It does not appear that Thelma met any members of Morton’s family (Anderson to Keller, 1963, Anderson to Keller, 1984).

I then opted to continue our search on Ancestry.com, a proprietary database favored by many amateur genealogists. I had joined Ancestry to do personal research and was impressed by the amount of information I was able to find quickly. This made me very optimistic about our chances for uncovering information about Morton’s family. I was also eager to apply Ancestry’s family tree feature to our project. The Ancestry feature keeps track of all the sources attached to any given person, and became an invaluable feature once we began digging into the family history. I began my search using Jellinek’s full name, Elvin Morton Jellinek, to ensure that the most accurate results appeared. I did try searching under his supposed alias, Nikita Hartmann, to see if he had been in America during the 1920s, but could not draw any real conclusions from the searches. The vast majority of the information about Morton on Ancestry.com covers the 1930s through his death, including city directories with his addresses, US Census accounts, passenger lists for boats and trains, and records of his death certificate.

Some of the first records that appeared were marriage certificates. Morton had at least four wives. We were able to find information about some of them through Ancestry. One of the first finds on Ancestry was the record of Morton’s marriage to Thelma in 1935 (New Hampshire, Marriage Records Index). Once I began searching under her name, I could also approximate from census records that their daughter was born around the mid-1930s (the actual birthdate, June 29, 1936, was verified later from the California Death Index, 1994), and could confirm that the marriage lasted approximately 10 years. In 1946, Morton is not listed in residence with his wife and daughter, confirming the information that Thelma had provided in her letters. The second marriage record that I was able to find was Morton’s marriage to Cora Lee Boylston in 1947 in South Carolina (Richland County, SC, Marriage Index, 1947). Documents from our Canadian colleagues showed that Morton’s fourth wife was named Martha Mary Healey (Strachan, 1989). Keller makes mention of meeting her father once in New York City (Keller to Anderson, 1988), but cannot provide any additional details. Martha
or Mary Healey is a common name, and search results under her name did not yield any promising leads.

Prior research had not uncovered any prior connections to South Carolina, so I decided that Cora merited some additional research. When searching under her name, one of the first results was the report of her death abroad from pneumonia while she was on a trip to Geneva with Morton in 1951. Her death was reported to the American consulate so that they could notify her relatives, including her parents, mother-in-law, and two children from a previous marriage. I decided to do some more searching into Cora’s first marriage, since I wanted to see if I could unearth how she and Morton crossed paths. Several census records show that she lived with her first husband, Edward Boylston, in Baltimore with their three children. Edward passed away at a young age and she was left a widow. Ancestry searches led us to a photograph of Cora’s gravestone, which she shares with her first husband. The most relevant and intriguing piece of information on the grave is the listing of a Christopher Jellinek. In all other aspects of our research, we never found any mention of Christopher, but he is likely her son by Morton, given his last name. We were able to find a Christopher Jellinek listed on Ancestry who was born in 1947.

After deciding that I had turned up as much information as I could on Morton’s marriages, I turned to his immediate family. One of the first documents I uncovered was a record of Marcel’s birth in Hungary, listing his full name as Markus Erwin Marcel Jellinek (JewishGen). Most of the additional documents were city directories that listed both home and business addresses in New York City, beginning in the late 1880s and ceasing with the family return to Europe. Most importantly, I found a record of Marcel’s naturalization as a US Citizen which was witnessed by a Solomon Jacobson (US Naturalization Index), most likely the same relative of Rose’s who went into the publishing business with Marcel; additionally, several of his passports were witnessed by a G. S. Jacobson (US Passport Application, 1895).

Ancestry soon confirmed that the difficulty in pinning down Rose’s background was mostly due to her own actions. I had hypothesized that searching under her given name or married name on Ancestry would be more successful to find official documents, but I was mistaken – Marcella Lindh was still the best search term. She applied for several passports at US consulates and embassies in the 1890s to travel for singing engagements. Rose appears to have traveled broadly within Europe, and always lists intention to return to the US. However, she is very inconsistent about her personal information. For example, she lists her birthplace once as Mexico City (US Passport Application, 1896), which is not corroborated by any other documentation. After WWI, information on Marcella is scarce except that she traveled in the early 1920s with her daughter to New York (New York Passenger List, 1920).

While researching Marcel, I uncovered a passport application from 1901 that lists Edna as being three weeks old (US Passport Application, 1901). Armed with a birthdate, I decided to tackle Edna’s history next. The vast majority of information found on Ancestry about Edna spans from 1920-26, when she traveled frequently to the United States from Europe. The best sources of information are her passport applications, which include addresses, occupations (she was a musician), and personal photographs (US Passport Application, 1921).

Her full name is Edna Eugenie Jellinek Lindh Pariser after her marriage around 1921 to Robert Pariser, a businessman from Berlin and possible school friend of Morton. A birth record turns up for her daughter, Marcella Krisztina Pariser, born 1926 in Budapest (US Consular Report of Births, 1924). We have a theory that Robert may have been a school friend of Morton’s, and may have aided him after fleeing Budapest. Robert and Edna’s marriage did not last – we do not know the exact date of divorce, but his second marriage to a German woman in Italy in 1939 was reported to the US consulate (US Consular
Reports of Marriages, 1939). After that, the records disappear.

Edna Jellinek's passport photo from 1921

I returned to the Google News search to see if I could find any additional information on Edna. Edna Jellinek's name appears frequently in the *Baltimore Sun* during the late 1940s and early 1950s as the director of the International Center at the Baltimore YWCA, considered an expert in folk art. There are several articles that feature her prominently, such as a piece about her and her mother's struggles in Budapest during WWII, where they lost virtually everything. Marcella lived in Baltimore with Edna (Baltimore Sun, 1947, Scarborough, 1947, Baltimore Sun, 1949). Additional searching showed that she and Marcella eventually ended up in Detroit, where Edna held a similar position for an art collection (Windsor Star, 1964). The Baltimore connection is important in another manner. Edna and Marcella arrived in Baltimore right after the end of WWII – seemingly, as soon as they could secure passage out of Europe. It is possible that, when visiting Edna and his mother in Baltimore, Morton met of Mrs. Cora Boylston for the first time.

At this point, I felt I had investigated Morton's immediate family to the best of my ability, and devoted my attention to tracking down the Jacobsons. The US Census became invaluable during this part of my research. An 1870 census record for Kalamazoo showed a Rosa Jacobson born to Solomon E. Jacobson (the same name as the witness to Marcel's naturalization) and Johanna Jacobson in 1867 (1870 US Census). She had three older brothers, but there is no mention of a sister named Elsie. Her parents and her oldest brother, Gustave, are listed as having been born in Mecklenburg, Germany. I was sure that I had found Rose. The second piece of convincing evidence was an 1881 ship manifest that shows parents Solomon and Johanna sailing to Hamburg with children Gustave, Charles, Rosa and Elsie (Staatsarchive, 1881).

During our research, we noticed that we had a large pile of home and work addresses from city directories and census records, prompting us to create a Google Map to track them. Once we began to collect members of the extended family, we realized that the map would be an excellent way to visualize the movements of the family and potential patterns of interaction. When examining the spread of Manhattan addresses, we could see that the Jellineks and Jacobsons stayed within the same bounds, even over decades. The goal for this map would be to put each decade into a different layer so that they could be viewed individually or applied so that you could do one-to-one or one-to-many comparisons. The map includes all of the addresses that we have for the Jellineks and Gustave Jacobson's family globally.

My final piece of research on Morton's family focused on his daughter, Ruth. Ship manifests on Ancestry showed she accompanied her father on some of his travels to Europe when she was a teenager (New York Passenger Lists, 1951, 1952). We knew from Thelma's letters that Ruth's married name was Surry. I was able to find some city directories that show Ruth lived her later years near Santa Barbara, California. We know from other research that, unfortunately, Ruth took her own life in 1994 (California Death Index, 1994). Research into her youngest son, Shawn, reveals that he passed away in 2011 (Social Security Death Index, 2011), but we have not been able to verify the
cause of his death. I was able to find whom I believe is Christopher Jellinek, but I am unable to verify the information.

Researching the Jellinek family was an enriching and enlightening task that has proved helpful in understanding the roots of Morton’s personality and academic interests. He grew up surrounded by various people with a multitude of interests and abilities, and this may have contributed to his ability to adapt so readily to the scientific study of alcohol and addiction.

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