

2014-10-15

## The last part of Lasker's legacy



Yours truly with Emily Allred

In his colorful [report of our visit to Saint Louis](#), and especially of the Sinquefield Cup Tournament Michael Negele announced a separate note from my pen on our activities in the World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF).

To be honest, I have to start with a confession: we didn't come at all to Saint Louis with the aim to attend the tournament. The tournament was so to speak a side effect, our goal was to go through the last remaining part of Emanuel Lasker's legacy that until recently was inaccessible for researchers. Actually I would better say: the *remainder* of that last remaining part, and it is only this remainder that shortly before had been bought for the World Chess Hall of Fame. This requires an explanation.

### The history of Lasker's legacy

After Martha Lasker's death in 1942 Emanuel Lasker's rather extensive legacy, consisting of letters, photos, scrapbooks, manuscripts, typescripts, books, magazines and memorabilia, came 'on the market' during the next decades. Most of his and Martha's heirs, all relatives of Martha (Martha and Emanuel had no children, but Martha and Emil Cohn had a daughter, Lotte Hirschberg), sold their parts of the legacy or donated them to public institutions, like the J.G. White Collection of the Cleveland Public Library. [[Visit to Cleveland, Ohio](#); [Meeting in a Chess Collector's Paradise](#)] As far as I know the chess antiquarians Albrecht Buschke and J.G. Kramer played an important role as intermediaries. Those who have the opportunity to look into David DeLucia's *In memoriam* (that splendid description of his library) will get an idea where important parts of the Lasker legacy ended up. For instance: the 1000 letters Lasker wrote to his wife in his lifetime are now part of DeLucia's library. The letters have been sorted in chronological order and the most important ones have been provided with short synopses. This work was perfectly done by Kramer in his *The letters (1890-1940) of Emanuel Lasker (1868-1941)* (Whitehall, PA, s.d.), a very labor-intensive effort, I may say. This material is of course indispensable for a future Lasker biographer, but it remains inaccessible for researchers. For that reason I hope David DeLucia will eventually decide to publish these letters in another book with treasures of his library.



Emanuel Lasker's travel chess set

### The remaining part

However, one of the heirs of Martha Lasker preferred to keep his part of the legacy, and deposited it at Löwenherz/Lion Heart, a New York antiquarian specialized in autographs, waiting for a buyer who was willing to pay \$650,000 for the collection, as was spread at that time. The Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft, founded in 2001 in Berlin, was very ambitious in the first years of its existence, and in 2006 showed interest in the content of the collection, but not in its price, even when a taxation of its current worth came to a substantially lower price. At that time however two versions of a rather well specified inventory of this collection appeared, probably prepared by Lowenherz (who writes his German name without Umlaut) himself. That inventory was of course necessary to convince potential buyers of the value of the collection.

### A bridge goldmine

After the General Meeting of the KWA in Cleveland in 2011 I made an intermediate stop in New York on my way back to Europe. It was my main concern to visit [Lion Heart Autographs](#), not because I wanted to spend the remaining cash of my Cleveland sojourn, but in the hope that I would be allowed to have a look at the collection. I had been motivated by the voluminous monograph *Emanuel Lasker, Denker, Weltenbürger, Schachweltmeister* published two years before. Having contributed to this monograph the chapter *Nicht nur Schach; Emanuel Lasker als Bridgespieler* (Not only chess; Emanuel Lasker as a bridge player), that inventory was mouth-watering for me: in at least 9 of the 22 box files of the collection bridge material or bridge related material was indexed!



The 22 files

As my original contribution to the Lasker monograph contained substantially more material than I could use in the final version of my chapter, I had at that time the intention to write a book on Lasker as a bridge player. What's more I could easily combine this theme with 'Lasker in Holland' during the period 1920-1934, which for a considerable part corresponds with his main bridge activities. Here in the remaining portion of Lasker's legacy I had seemingly found a true goldmine that would make it possible to draw a more complete picture, especially of the ten non-chess years of his life (1925-1934). But of course I had to assess the content of those boxes with my own eyes to be sure that the material was as valuable as it promised to be.

### For the time being the history ends in Saint Louis

The only obstacle to overcome was to be permitted to look into those boxes and to take photos of the most interesting pieces. But when I arrived at Mr. Lowenherz' office he had just left for the Frankfurter Buchmesse! The subsequent correspondence had no positive result as the former owner was only interested in selling the collection, and moreover he had formally declared that the inventory list had been disseminated without his permission and any published or unpublished references to it hadn't been and would not be authorized!

But in the end, after lowering his asking price considerably (as it was rumored), the owner of the collection found a buyer, or better, a couple of buyers. It seems that David DeLucia bought the collection together with Rex Sinquefield providing that he (DeLucia) could make the first selection, and that the remainder of the remaining part of Lasker's legacy would be acquired by Sinquefield for the World Chess Hall of Fame. And so 5 large moving boxes, containing the original 22 box files, hadn't arrived in Saint Louis so long ago, but of course these original boxes were considerably emptier than they must have been in New York ... As we had been told, the price paid for them should have come up to about \$60.000. But anyway, for the first time the last part of Lasker's legacy, that is to say only a rather small part of it, is now at least accessible to research, and that is the reason why Michael Negele and I went to Saint Louis.



[Rex A. Sinquefield](#)

## **Super bonus**

And we came at the right moment, but of course not completely unplanned, although at the time we had to make decisions about bookings the dates of the tournament were not yet settled. The Sinquefield Cup was more or less a bonus; however that we would attend one of the most remarkable events in the history of chess was entirely unforeseen. So we got a super bonus! For Michael this meant that he had to take several tasks as chess journalist on his proven shoulders: those of a reporter of the tournament, of a photographer of the whole event and last but not least of an interviewer of the man who had made it possible to create the new chess center of the United States in Saint Louis (and let us not forget that he also bought the last remains of Lasker's legacy!).



[Michael Negele](#)

interviews Rex Sinquefield

On top of that Michael wanted to play some chess, but that proved to be too much. I promised however not to speak about it, so I keep mum.

Nevertheless Michael provided his terrible game against Akobian:

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/* Brettbreite an Viewport anpassen */ var breite = window.innerWidth; /* linken und rechten Rand einbeziehen */ breite = breite - 20; /* Brettkoordinaten einbeziehen, wenn sie angezeigt werden */ if ("== '1') { breite = breite - 15; } var pSize = 35; if((pSize*8) > breite) { switch (true) { case (breite Elemente der Seite suchen und onchange zuweisen */ window.onload = function() { // Select-Array mit allen Selectelementen erstellen var arrSel = document.getElementsByTagName("select"); // Select-Array durchlaufen for(var i=0; i
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