

DOCUMENT #18
Mendel's Autobiography
April 17, 1850

Löbliche K. K. Prüfungs- Commission !

Den hohen Verordnungen des Ministeriums für Cultus und Unterricht gemäss, unterbreitet der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte eine kurze Skizze seines Lebens.

/1/ Siehe Dr. Hugo Iltis "Gregor Johann Mendel, Leben, Werk und Wirkung".

/2/ Die Orthographie wurde dem Originale getreu beibehalten.

Derselbe ist /laut Beilage A/ in Heinzendorf in Schlesien, wo sein Vater Besitzer eines kleinen Bauerngrundes war, im Jahre 1822 geboren, Nachdem er den Elementarunterricht in der dortigen Dorfschule und später an dem Piaristen-Collegium in Leipnik erhalten hatte, wurde er im Jahre 1834 am Troppauer k. k. Gymnasium in die Ite Grammatical-Classse aufgenommen. Vier Jahre später wurden die Eltern desselben durch mehrere schnell auf einander folgende Unglücksfälle gänzlich ausser Stad gesetzt die nötigen Studienauslagen zu bestreiten, und der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte, damals erst 16 Jahre alt, kam dadurch in die traurige Lage, ganz allein für seine Erhaltung sorgen zu müssen. Er besuchte deshalb den Lehrkurs für "Schulkandidaten und Privatlehrer" an der Kreis- Hauptschule in Troppau, und da er nach abgelegter Prüfung in dem Befähigungszeugnisse /Beilage B/ bestens empfohlen wurde, gelang es ihm, während den Humanitäts-Studien durch Privatunterricht doch so viel zu erwerben, dass er notdürftig leben konnte.

Als derselbe das Gymnasium im Jahre 1840 absolviert hatte, war es seine erste Sorge, sich die nötigen Mittel zur Fortsetzung seiner Studien zu sichern. Er machte deshalb in Olmütz wiederholte Versuche, seine Dienste als Privatlehrer anzubieten, aber alle seine Bemühungen blieben bei dem Mangel an Freunden und Empfehlungen erfolglos. Der Kummer über diese getäuschten Hoffnungen und die bange traurige Aussicht, welche ihm die Zukunft darbot, wirkten damals so mächtig auf ihn ein, dass er erkrankte, und zur Erholung ein Jahr bei seinen Eltern zubringen musste.

Im folgenden Jahre sah sich endlich der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte in die erwünschte Lage versetzt, dass er Olmütz durch Nebenunterricht wenigstens seine notwendigsten Bedürfnisse decken und somit seine Studien fortsetzen konnte. Mit dem Aufwande aller seiner Kräfte gelang es demselben die beiden Jahrgänge der Philosophie zu absolvieren /Beilage D,E,F,G,/ Der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte fühlte, dass es ihm nicht möglich sei, solche Anstrengungen noch weiter zu ertragen, er sah sich daher nach beendigten philosophischen Studien gezwungen, in einen Stand zu treten, der ihm von den bitteren Nahrungssorgen befreite. Seine Verhältnisse entschieden seine Standeswahl. Er verlangte und erhielt im Jahre 1843 in das Augustiner-Stift St. Thomas in Altbrunn.

Seine materielle Lage war durch diesen Schritt eine ganz andere geworden. Mit der für jedes Studium so erspriesslichen Behaglichkeit der physischen Existenz kehrte dem ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigten auch Mut und Kraft zurück, und er studierte die für das Probejahr vorgeschriebenen classischen Gegenstände mit vieler Lust und Liebe. In den freien Stunden beschäftigte er sich mit der kleinen botanisch-mineralogischen Sammlung, die ihm im Stifte zu Gebote stand. Seine Vorliebe für das Fach der Naturwissenschaft wurde immer grösser, je mehr er Gelegenheit fand, sich mit derselben vertraut zu machen. Obwohl derselbe bei diesem Studium aller mündlichen Anleitung entbehrte, und der autodidaktische Weg hier, wie vielleicht bei keiner anderen Wissenschaft, äusserst beschwerlich ist und langsam zum Ziele führt, so hat doch derselbe das Studium der Natur seit jener Zeit so lieb gewonnen, dass er keine Anstrengung scheuen wird, durch Selbststudium und den Rat erfahrener Männer die noch vorhandenen Lücken auszufüllen. Im Jahre 1846 hörte derselbe auch die in die Richtung gehörenden Vorträge über Oekonomie,

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Autobiography of Mendel.

Obstbaumzucht und Weinbau an der philosophischen Lehranstalt in Brünn.
/Beilage H.I.K./

Nach dem im Jahre 1848 absolvierten theologischen Studien erhielt der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte von seinem Hochw. Herrn Prälaten die Erlaubnis, sich für die philosophischen Rigorosen vorzubereiten. Als er im folgenden Jahre im Begriffe stand, sich den Prüfungen zu unterziehen, erging die Aufforderung an ihn, eine Supplentenstelle am k. k. Gymnasium in Znaim anzunehmen, und er folgte diesem Rufe mit Freuden. Er war seit dem Anfange seiner Supplirung nach Kräften bemüht, die ihm anvertrauten Gegenstände den Schülern auf eine leichtfassliche Weise beizubringen, und hofft auch, nicht ohne Erfolg gewirkt zu haben, da er in dem Privatunterrichte, dem er durch vier Jahre sein Brot zu verdanken hatte, hinreichend Gelegenheit fand, über die möglichen Leistungen der Schüler und die verschiedenen Grade der jugendlichen Fassungskraft Erfahrungen zu sammeln.

Der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte glaubt hiemit eine kurze Zusammenfassung seiner Lebensgeschichte gegeben zu haben. Seine kummervolle Jugend lehrte ihn frühzeitig die ernstesten Seiten des Lebens zu kennen, sie lehrte ihn auch arbeiten. Selbst während er die Früchte einer gesicherten Oekonomie genoss blieb der Wunsch in ihm rego, sich seinen Lebensunterhalt auch verdienen zu können. Der ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigte würde sich glücklich schätzen, wenn er den Anforderungen einer löblichen Prüfungs-Commission entsprechen würde und die Erfüllung seines Wunsches ermöglichen könnte. Er würde dann gewiss keine Mühe und Aufopferung scheuen, um seine Pflichten auf das Pünktlichste nachzukommen.

Znaim am 17. ten April 1850

Gregor Mendel
Suppl. Professor
am k. k. Gymn. in Znaim.

Honorable Royal and Imperial Testing Commission!

In accordance with the high orders of the Ministry for Culture and Instruction, the respectful undersigned submits a short sketch of his life.

The same was born ^{in the year 1822} (according to enclosure A) in Heinzendorf in Silesia, where his father was the possessor of a small peasant holding, after which he received his elementary instruction in the local village school and later in the Piarist college in Leipzig, he was admitted in the year 1834 to the Royal and Imperial Gymnasium of Troppau in the 1st grammatical class. Four years later, through several misfortunes following rapidly upon one another, the parents of the same were rendered ^{completely} ~~unable~~ to defray the necessary ^{expenses} ~~costs~~ of studies, and the respectful undersigned at that time only 16 years old, came through this into the sad situation, that he had to provide for himself entirely alone. He therefore attended the course of instruction for "school candidates and private teachers" at the district high school in Troppau, and since he succeeded best in the

(enclosure B)

qualifying examinations, he succeeded in earning enough through private tutoring in the humanities that he was able to live penuriously.

When the same had completed the Gymnasium in the year 1840, it was his first concern to assure the necessary means for the continuation of his studies. He therefore made repeated efforts in Amity to offer his services as a private teacher, but all his endeavors remained unsuccessful for lack of friends and influence. Grief over these deluded hopes and the sad outlook which the future held for him had so severe an effect upon him that he became sick, and was obliged to spend a year with his parents for recovery.

In the following year the respected undersigned saw himself finally in the desired position, that he could cover minimally his barest necessities by tutoring and thereby could continue his studies. With the use of all of his strength the same succeeded in completing the two year course in philosophy (enclosures D, E, F, G).

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substantially

The respectful undersigned felt that it would not be possible for him to endure such exertions still further, he saw himself forced therefore after the completion of his philosophical studies to enter a profession in which he would be freed of the bitter necessities of life. His circumstances determined his choice of profession. He applied and was received in the Augustinian monastery of St. Thomas in Altbriinn.

His material position was completely changed by this step. With every comfort of physical existence provided for him so advantageously, the respectful undersigned returned to every study with spirit and vigor, and during the year of probation he studied the prescribed classical course with much pleasure and ~~love~~ ^{zeal}. In the free hours, he occupied himself with the small botanical-mineralogical collection which was available to him in the monastery. His preference for the profession of natural science became

ever
~~always~~ greater, the more he found
opportunity to make himself familiar
with the same. Although the same
lacked all verbal guidance for this
study, and the self-teaching path here as
perhaps with no other science is
burdensome and leads slowly to
the goal, still the same had by this
time acquired such a love for
the study of nature, that he spared
no effort, through self-study and
the advice of experienced men, to
fill in the gaps at hand. In the year
1846, the same heard the lecture courses
on economy, fruit tree culture, and
viticulture in the philosophical
institute in Brunn (enclosures H, I, K.)

After the completion of ~~his~~ theological
studies in the year 1848, the respectful
undersigned received from his Reverend
Lord Prelate the permission to prepare
for his oral examinations in philosophy.
~~While~~ he had the intention of taking his
examinations in the following year,
the ^{request} opportunity came to him to take
a substitute position in the royal
and imperial Gymnasium in Znaim,
and he followed this call with
joy. From the beginning of his

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substitute service, he strove with all his strength to present the subjects entrusted to him to the students in an easily understandable way, and he hoped also, not without success, that he would find sufficient opportunity in private teaching, to which he owed his bread for four years to gather experience concerning the possible efforts of the students and the different grades of youthful comprehension.

The respectful undersigned believes that he has given herewith a short summary of his life story. His trouble-laden youth taught him early to know the serious side of life, and taught him also to work. Even while he enjoyed the fruits of an assured economy, the wish remained active in him to be able to give service for his livelihood. The respectful undersigned would consider himself fortunate if he could answer the requirements of an honorable Teaching Commission and attain the fulfillment of his wish. He would then surely spare neither pains nor labor to comply with his duties in every detail.

Znaim, April 17, 1850

Gregor Mendel
Suppl. Professor
am K. K. Gymn. in Znaim

Mendel's Autobiography

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To the Estimable K.K. Examination Commission.

According to the order of the Ministry of Cult and Education, the respectful undersigned submits a short sketch of his life.

The undersigned (according enclosure A) was born in 1822 in Heinzendorf, Silesia, where his father owned a small farm. After he had obtained his primary education at the local village school and later at the Piarist college in Leipnik, he was accepted in 1834 at the K.K. gymnasium of Troppau in the first grammar class. Four years later, owing to several reverses following each other in rapid succession, his parents were absolutely unable to pay the necessary expenses for his education, and the respectful undersigned, then only 16 years old, was therefore in the painful situation to have to provide all by himself for his support. Therefore he followed the ^cursus for teachers and private tutors at the District High School of Troppau, and since, after making his examination, he was very much recommended in his diploma (enclosure B), he was enabled during his humaniora studies to earn enough to live economically.

When in 1840 he left the gymnasium, his first care was to procure for himself the necessary means to continue his studies. He therefore made several attempts in Olmütz to offer his services as private tutor, but, lacking friends and recommendations, all his efforts were in vain. The sorrow of his crushed hope, and the long and sorrowful outlook the future held in store for him, made such a deep impression upon him that he became ill and that he was compelled to spend a year with his parents to recuperate.

The following year the respectful undersigned found himself in the wished for position that by teaching in Olmütz, when disengaged, he was able to provide for the most necessaries of life and thus

continue his studies. By the utmost exertion he was able to finish the two years study of philosophy (enclosure D,E,F,G). The respectful undersigned felt that it was impossible for him to keep up such exertion any longer; he was therefore compelled to select a position which would free him of the bitter cares of providing for his existence. His means decided his choice of position. He applied for permission to enter the Augustinian monastery of St. Thomas in Altbrunn. He entered in 1843.

His material condition by taking this step was wholly changed. With the pleasant feeling of an assured physical comfortableness, which is most beneficial in whatever sort of study, returned for the respectful undersigned also the courage and strength and he studied the prescribed matter of the probation year with joy and love. During his free time he occupied himself with the small botanical and mineralogical collection which was at his disposal in the monastery. His predilection for the natural sciences increased in proportion that he found occasion to become better acquainted with them. Though in this study he had no oral direction, and the way of self study here, as perhaps in no other science, is extremely difficult and only slowly leads to the proposed object, he has gained such a love for the study of nature that, by self study and the advice of experienced people, he will not spare any effort to fill the missing gaps. In 1846 he also attended for that purpose the lectures on agriculture, fruit arboriculture and vineculture at the philosophical educational institution of Brunn (enclosure H,I,K).

After finishing in 1848 the theological studies, the respectful undersigned obtained from the Very Rev. Prelate permission to prepare himself for the doctorate in ~~philosophy~~ philosophy. When the next year he was on the point to pass the examination, he received the order to take the position of temporary teacher at

the K.K. gymnasium of Znaim, which he did with pleasure. As soon as he commenced teaching, he exerted all his efforts to teach the students in an intelligible way the branches confided to him; he also hopes he has not labored in vain, since in the private tutorship to which he owed his living for 4 years he obtained sufficient opportunities to know by experience the ~~achievements~~ achievements and the different grades of the intellectual grasp of the youth.

The respectful undersigned believes, that herewith he has given a short summary of his life. His distressful youth made him early acquainted with the ~~responsibility~~ seriousness of life and taught him to work. Even when enjoying the benefits of an assured subsistence, the desire remained in him to be able to provide for his livelihood. The respectful undersigned would consider himself very happy, if he could come up to the requirements of the examination commission and could see his wishes fulfilled. He would then spare no labor or sacrifice to fulfill his duties to the limit.

Znaim, April 17th 1850.

Gregory Mendel,
temporary teacher
at the K.K. gymnasium in Znaim.