

Family in Middle Of 2-Way Tragedy

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The impact of what did happen dealt its anguish 2,500 miles away and seven months later to the De Mohrenschildts.

"We habitually tuned in with our transistor radios on KRLD, which came in clear as a whistle in the evening with the Dallas weather reports and news of what was happening at home," De Mohrenschildt said. "But during the day we seldom listened."

So it wasn't until they attended a party at the Labanese Embassy that the tragic event was told them by a Pan American airline executive.

The reaction was first disbelief, then shock, then grief that such a thing could be, and that it should have happened in Dallas. They left their champagne untouched, went immediately to join American friends connected with the U.S. Embassy, and joined them in a sad vigil with the radio. It was then that De Mohrenschildt asked his Oswald question and offered to give all information he and Mrs. De Mohrenschildt had, an offer subsequently carried through with the Warren Commission.

The De Mohrenschildts had met the Oswalds through other Russian-speaking friends whom they had joined in giving assistance to the young couple.

OSWALD, they said, was not unlikeable but lacked the stability either to do well in his various jobs, to maintain a serene family life or, for that matter, to become a trusted member of any group which might be conspiring against the President.

"He talked freely of the time he had spent in Russia and explained that he was interested in the country because he thought maybe there he could find his ideals. He left, disappointed, because he could not."

The De Mohrenschildts hadn't

seen either Oswald or Marina for some time before they left in April of 1963 for De Mohrenschildt to conduct a survey of mineral and oil resources for the Haitian government.

De Mohrenschildt's relationship with other leading participants in the tragic event had been of much longer duration: His friendship with Mrs. Kennedy's father, John Bouvier, and mother, Mrs. Auchincloss, began almost immediately after his arrival in New York as a youth. It encompassed Jackie, a pretty little girl whom he bounced on his knee and whose independent spirit made her unforgettable even as a child.

DE MOHRENSCHILDT was born in Russia in the little town of Minsk where his father, a Swedish engineer, was governor of the province. Therein lies another of the stranger-than-fiction coincidences, for it was in Minsk that Oswald spent most of his Russian stay.

"It gave us a lot to talk about when I first knew Oswald," he pointed out. "I remembered the town from my childhood and asked him questions about it."

After leaving Russia, George spent his boyhood in Belgium and Poland, was graduated from the University of Belgium. Later in this country he stayed a short time in New York, became a naturalized citizen, and attended the University of Texas.

His arrival in New York in 1938 coincided with Mrs. De Mohrenschildt's — but they were not to meet until 10 years ago "at Maple Terrace right here in Dallas." The daughter of a Russian father and French mother,

she was born in China, had escaped that war-torn country on the last boat to leave its ports.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL background of the couple, plus his constant global travels and his acquaintance with the Oswalds brought De Mohrenschildt such "billings" as "international playboy" in Eastern newspapers and "assassin's friend" in Haiti at the time of the Kennedy tragedy.

"That kind of thing was quickly cleared up," he said, "but I think what helped the most was my great-great grandfather. He was a Swedish officer who came to the colonies and, thank goodness, signed his name on the American Declaration of Independence."

The De Mohrenschildts plan to visit the Kennedy site and see the recently erected marker — but so far they haven't.

"Three years is not so long, and we still feel so deeply about the whole thing it's going to take a little time for us to face the actual place where it happened."

Nor have they contacted Marina though they think probably they will.