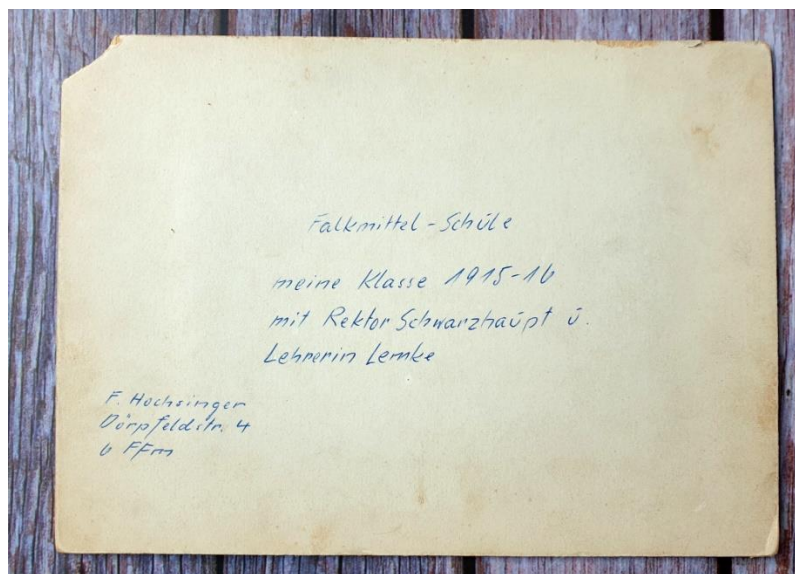


## Wilhelm Schwarzhaupt, a father, a schoolmaster, and a politician



I love old classroom photos because so many family trees relate to that one photo! Look at this one – 27 students and 2 teachers all connected in that moment in time.

This large classroom photo came to me in the batch of the Grein-Schneider-Wenzel photos I shared a few blogposts ago. It is labelled in the same handwriting, as well.



The text on the back of the photo says:

**“Falk secondary school. My class of 1915-1916 with schoolmaster Schwarzhaupt and teacher Lemke”**

The text in the lower corner might give us a clue who this photo belonged to and where this school might have been located at – “FFm” stands for Frankfurt am Main in Germany.

So I first googled the name of the school and of the schoolmaster Schwarzhaupt. If I’m not mistaken, the Falk School still exists as a [secondary school](#) in Frankfurt today. I can’t find anything on the school’s history online and whether it used to be a school only for girls in 1915-16 when this photo was taken. The WWII destroyed 90% of the buildings in Frankfurt, I am therefore also not sure if the original building survived.

But I can tell you a lot about the schoolmaster **Wilhelm Schwarzhaupt!** For him, Falk School was a steppingstone in a long career as a teacher, schoolmaster and a politician.



Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Schwarzhaupt was born on October 4th, 1871, in Schlüchtern as a son of a teacher Peter Schwarzhaupt and Sophie Margarethe née Quehl. After his school years in Fulda, he graduated from a teachers’ college. He then attended the lectures at the Bonn and Marburg universities and passed his schoolmaster exam. He then worked in the profession in Herborn, Usingen and at the Falk school in Frankfurt. In 1920, he became a member of the Municipal School Board, then the superintendent and lastly the Magistrate superintendent of schools; he also wrote and co-authored many school textbooks.

Schwarzhaupt was politically liberally minded and that together with his Christian family values probably influenced his choice of political orientation towards the National Liberal Party ([Nationalliberalen Partei](#)) and later German People’s Party ([Deutsche Volkspartei](#)). Schwarzhaupt was an elected representative and spokesman of education policy in the Assembly of Prussia ([Preußischen Landtag](#)) from 1921 until 1933 when his political party was forced to dissolve as a result of not wanting to merge with the Nazi Party and he was forced into early retirement. After WWII, he got back on the political saddle and contributed to the founding of the Liberal Democratic Party (LPD) in Hessen, which in 1948 developed into today’s Free Democratic Party of Germany, the classical-liberals. Schwarzhaupt was also a Freemason.

In April 1900, Schwarzhaupt had married Frieda née Emmerich in Frankfurt (Click [HERE](#)). Frieda had graduated from a teachers’ college herself and took pride in her profession. Frieda was an enthusiast of suffrage movement and admired the works of Helene Lange and Gertrud Bäumer. Frieda’s interest in politics and women’s movement probably made her an equal and interesting partner in conversations with her husband Wilhelm.

I found another photo of him and his wife Frieda on the internet (Click [HERE](#) to view source):



Der Vater: Wilhelm Schwarzhaupt  
(1871–1961)



Die Mutter: Frieda Schwarzhaupt, geb.  
Emmerich (1873–1961)

The couple had two children: Elisabeth and Adolf. I found their photos on the internet (Click [HERE](#) to view source).



Elisabeth und Adolf Schwarzhaupt



Die Geschwister Elisabeth und Adolf Schwarzhaupt in den 30er Jahren



Wilhelm's son Adolf Schwarzhaupt was born in 1903. He was a sales clerk. I find him on a passenger list of "Westphalia", travelling to New York in 1928. And then I find him lodging in New Jersey in 1930, working as an office clerk (Click [HERE](#)). Perhaps he intended to live in America permanently or stayed there for an internship to collect valuable business experience. But looks like his stay in America was cut short by the WWII looming in Europe. He returned to Germany only to get killed in action in 1945. What a tragic waste of young life!

Wilhelm's daughter Elisabeth Schwarzhaupt was born on January 7th, 1901. She had an incredible career in justice and politics. She became the first female Cabinet Minister of Germany in 1961. She herself has said in numerous interviews that her childhood home, her parents' attitudes and values greatly influenced and helped shape her future career. She has reflected on the political discussions and debates in her youth at the family dinner table, her parents' openness to change from old ways. When Elisabeth graduated from the teachers' college and instead of starting work as a teacher, she mentioned her aspirations to study jurisprudence, her father Wilhelm supported her decision. In 1921, the general laws and the male-dominant society still did not see women fit to work in the administration of justice. But Wilhelm together with his wife Frieda believed in their daughter's potential and in the potential of all women to change that out-dated attitude. She became a judge of family court. Her political aspirations rose a couple of decades later and I wonder what advice her father gave to her when she finally decided to join the Christian Democratic Union of Germany.

Wilhelm Schwarzhaupt passed away on August 16th, 1961. Sadly, he did not live to witness her daughter being sworn in as the first female Cabinet Minister of Germany on November 14th, 1961. I'm sure he would have been very proud. Just like he was surely proud of all the girls in the classroom photo from 1915-16.

