

4/18/62

Biographical Sketch

On arriving late at a joint meeting of the departments of psychiatry and neurology at a leading New York hospital, Max Fink tells of being jokingly asked by the chairman on what side of the "professional" aisle he would take his seat that night. The two aspects of his interest and training in neurology and psychiatry are reflected in his professional career which has been devoted to research studies into the neurophysiological and psychological aspects of psychiatric treatments at Hillside Hospital. While developing the programs of the Department of Experimental Psychiatry, Dr. Fink was a practitioner in the North Shore area, and it was during this period that he took an active part in the activities of the N.P. Society. In 1959-60, he was president of the Society -- the^{at} year the Society saw the founding of the Newsletter and a re-organization of the committee system.

~~Early~~ Experience answering the telephone and as an observer of the excitements of his father's busy medical practice aroused his interest in medicine at an early age. As a pre-medical student on the Heights campus of New York University, he undertook his first research study as part of the biology honors program -- an analysis of the "periodicity in mitotic behavior of the neural tube of the embryonic chick". While he achieved many scholastic honors as an undergraduate, none are so prized as his election to the honorary political science society, Alpha Pi - as the single

pre-medical candidate in a class of pre-law candidates!

Medical education at Bellevue during the war years and a rotating internship set the stage for military service. Because of an "interest" in neurology he was sent to the School of Military Neuropsychiatry and ^{thus started on} a career in psychiatry. With separation from the service, and feeling that there was more to the world than his stateside experiences allowed, he shipped out as surgeon, first with the Grace Line to the west coast of South America and then with the American Export Lines to the Mediterranean. Coming ashore in New York from a cruise, he was introduced to the young daughter of passenger friends and soon after, began the courtship with Martha which led to marriage in 1949.

After the cruising sojourn, training continued in Montefiore, Bellevue and Hillside Hospitals. Concurrent training at William Alanson White Institute led to his receiving their Certificate for Physicians in 1953. It was at Bellevue, while a student with Morris B. Bender, that he launched his research career. Stimulated by Dr. Bender's pioneering perceptual studies, his first interest was in simultaneous tactile stimulation tests as reflections of brain dysfunction. Studies of carotid angiography, psycholinguistics, electroencephalography and psychological tests followed rapidly as aspects of behavior under conditions of altered brain function. These interests became the foci of

the programs in convulsive and drug therapies at Hillside which have occupied his full time interest since 1958.

This work has been honored by awards of the Electroshock Research Association and the Society of Biological Psychiatry, and recently, by appointment to the National Institute of Mental Health Committee on Clinical Drug Evaluation. He is also consultant to the Director of the Division of Mental Diseases of Missouri, and is participating in developing the programs of the new Missouri Institute of Psychiatry.

Tennis and skiing are the principal recreational interests of the Fink family. Last August the family joined Jonathan in camp where Max was the camp physician -- spending most of his time on the courts and water skiing.