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Young Man Hitler - I

Lead: Six decades after he took his own life amid the rubble of the Third Empire, Adolf Hitler continues to hold the imagination of the world as it looks for clues in his childhood to the development of a monster.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Since he burst on the scene in a failed coup attempt in a Munich Beer Garden in 1923, Adolf Hitler seemed to understand Germany and the needs of his adopted home. His substantial rhetorical ability allowed him to

speak for many Germans who were disappointed at the national defeat in 1918, sensed that Germany was being denied her appropriate place in the ranks of great nations, and longed to be challenged to national distinction. He took Germany to its moment of greatest triumph and down to terrible defeat. Many of the impulses that animated this tragically brilliant man can be traced to his childhood in Austria in the years before the turn of the 20th century.

Hitler grew up in an unstable home. His father retired early from the Austrian Civil Service and moved his family frequently in the boy's formative years. Alois Heidler was in his fifties at the time of his retirement

and ruled the house with a strong hand. His mother was indulgent of the boy's normal rebelliousness because he was born after a string of miscarriages. By the time he entered school, the indulgent mother and dominant father had produced a bright head-strong child, rebellious, but fascinated with authority figures. He also had an instinctive rhetorical ability with an innate skill to persuade and turn people to his will.

Next time: a frustrated artist.

Research assistance by Stephen Andrew DuMont, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Kubizek, August. *The Young Hitler I Knew*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1954.

Maser, Walter. *Hitler*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd.

<http://www.masterliness.com/a/Hitler.htm>

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