

CONNECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AUGSBURG



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Augsburg Experiences & Connections



The **Family Spotlight** is a regularly featured column in our newsletter. This is a place where you can help us get to know your family and its history by sharing stories that focus on an event, a family heirloom, your family's contributions to Augsburg, etc.

The theme of this issue is **Experiences and Connections Made by Traveling to Augsburg**. Some of us have been lucky enough to visit Augsburg. Perhaps it was an independent trip, or perhaps it was as part of one of the reunions organized by the Jewish Museum of Augsburg Swabia. Did you reconnect with your family's former life while you were there? Did you meet people who knew your ancestors? How did the visit affect you/your life? What impact did the experience have on you, and on your family members whom you met or traveled with? Is this something you would recommend to others, and if so why? We are pleased to share your stories.

Visit to Augsburg

By Dan Schumm, son of Gabriele Schumm (née Binswanger) 1911 – 1985. He resides in San Francisco, California

I visited Augsburg in November 2006 as one of 16 members of the rather far-flung remnants of the



Kathe Underwood (née Eisenmann) (1909 - 2008) daughter of Karolina Eisemann (née Binswanger) of Augsburg and Benigna Schönhagen, 2006

Binswanger family who travelled from the United States, South America, and Europe to attend the opening of the new permanent exhibit at the Jewish Museum. Upon my return I wrote a reflection on

my thoughts leading up to, during, and following the visit.

First, let me share some family background. My mother, Gabriele Binswanger, was born in Augsburg to Ludwig and Erna (née Reutlinger). In 1934 she emigrated to Palestine where she later met my father, also an émigré from Germany. My brother and I were born there.

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Wolfgang Bernheim – Not Forgotten at Last

By Michael Bernheim, son of Erhard Bernheim. Michael lives in Augsburg.

When 18-year-old Wolfgang perished in the Sakrau labor camp near Auschwitz, it was not certain that anything about his life would ever be remembered at all. Not even the exact date of his death is known. Throughout his life, Wolfgang enjoyed safety and stability for only short periods of time. Step by step, he lost everything he had.

He was born in Augsburg in 1923, a few weeks after my father, his cousin. His parents divorced in 1926, most likely a nightmare for a three-year-old. His mother Carolina moved back to her hometown of Cologne. When Wolfgang was seven years old, his father Kurt, my grandfather's brother, got married again to a non-Jewish woman. Before the wedding, Kurt and Wolfgang were baptized.

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L-R: Wolfgang and his half-siblings Ursula (Uschi) and Peter, circa 1936

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- Preserve History
- Conduct Outreach
- Support the Jewish Museum
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Schwaben (JMAS)*

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*Please note that posted deadlines
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and on Facebook at
([https://www.facebook.com/
juedischesmuseumaugsbuerg/](https://www.facebook.com/juedischesmuseumaugsbuerg/)).

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A Message from our Co-Chairpersons

Written by Bettina Kaplan

We continue to be amazed at how our
newsletter lives up to its name! As we
present to you our eighth edition of
Connections, we can't help but reflect on
how the newsletter has facilitated some real
connections, especially over the last
year. Here are just some stories:

This past summer, we received an email from a retired professor from the
University of the West Indies in Jamaica. He was a former colleague of an Augsburg
descendant who had recently passed away. In preparing a speech for his late
colleague's memorial service, he came across our newsletter on the JMAS website.
He had read an article written by his colleague's sister and wrote to ask if he could be
in touch with her. We forwarded his email and were delighted to learn that she was
very happy to be connected to her brother's colleague. She looked forward to
receiving a copy of his speech. Another example is how our newsletter has allowed us
to remain connected with Gernot Römer, the DJCA's friend and author of so many
books about Augsburg's Jewish community. Many have reached out to him directly
and he has expressed his joy in reading the generous tributes written. Finally, as you'll
read in the article on page 8, contributed by Steven Anson and Michael Feller, a
series of connections led to these grandsons of two Augsburg residents – one Jewish,
the other not - discovering the close ties between their families.

We hope that **Connections** can continue to be a vehicle to learn, share, and, of
course, CONNECT others who are interested in the history of Augsburg's Jewish
community!

Being able to publish our stories is our contribution to preserving history and
providing a resource for today's and future generations. We are continually grateful for
those that take the time to write. It contributes to the permanent record of our
history. While we treasure articles from former residents, we believe 2nd, 3rd, and 4th
generations also have insightful experiences to share. Most importantly, we all can
speak for those who can no longer do so.

We send you our best wishes for a happy, healthy, and peaceful 2022 and look
forward to continuing to connect! ☸



L-R: Diane Castiglione and Bettina Kaplan

From the Editor

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue! It is
chock full of great articles and very interesting feedback about the
issue of German citizenship from our last **Food for Thought**
column and the follow-up survey (beginning on Page 13 and
continuing on pages 18 and 19). Thank you for writing in!

On November 8, 2021, I was honored to be featured as a
keynote speaker regarding the events of November 9 and 10,
1938 and the impact they had on my father and my extended
family. The program was done on Zoom (see News Briefs,
Page 12) and a recording is available on Facebook. I was also fortunate to be
included in a video interview conducted by the Jewish Museum of Augsburg's
LIFELINES Series done in 2010, parts of which are in the exhibition that just opened.

The bottom line is that it is so important to educate the public about what
happened to our families in Germany. Even more so because there are so many
parallels between what happened in Germany in the 1930s and what is happening
here in America today. As my father would have said, "We can not stand idly by. We
must speak out and take action against injustice and prejudice whenever and
wherever we see it."

**We invite you to contribute to our June 2022 issue with the theme of *How
Former German Citizens Contributed to the War Effort after Emigrating*.**
See Page 17 for more information.

It would be especially great to hear from some members of the next generation for
this newsletter! If you are the grandchild or great-grandchild of a survivor, our new
Food for Thought question is perfect for you. Please let us hear from you. It's your
input that makes **Connections** so special and important. **Wishing you the happiest
of holidays, and a New Year filled with good health, safety, success, and joy!** ☸



Deborah Sturm Rausch

Letter from JMAS Director Staudinger

Dear Descendants of the Jewish
Community of Augsburg and
Friends of the Jewish Museum,

Today I am addressing you for the last time as Director of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia. As of Spring 2022, I will be in Vienna, where I will take over as Director of the Jewish Museum Vienna starting in July 2022. This change brings me great excitement as I return to my hometown, but also some sadness, because Augsburg, the Jewish museum, the Jewish community, and, of course, you, dear Descendants, have grown close to my heart. My successor will lead the museum from April 2022 and I am sure that the good and intensive relations with you will continue. Even though I myself will no longer be in Augsburg, I would be happy if we would stay in touch and to hear from you now and then – I myself will also be in touch, I promise!

But there is still some time before I leave Augsburg, and we still have a lot to do! On October 28, the exhibition "Jews through the eyes of others" opened in the museum's permanent exhibition. This exhibition, which I curated with Souzana Hazan, is very important to me because it takes a critical look at the museum's collection. What objects are collected in the museum and why? To what extent does the Jewish Museum's collection help to reinforce rather than dissolve stereotypical images of Jews, and what can be done about it? The exhibition invites visitors to question their own prejudices about Jews and Judaism. "Jews through the eyes of others" will be on view until September 2022.

With the end of October, our exhibition "Shalom Sisters"! Jewish Feminist Positions" came to an end. We are very pleased that this exhibition, which was shown at several locations in Augsburg, received such a positive response. Both the current and the past Consul Generals of Israel visited the exhibition and were very enthusiastic. This makes us particularly proud.

In the former Synagogue Kriegshaber, our new exhibition "End of Contemporary Witnessing?" will be on display from December 1, 2021. This exhibition was developed by the Jewish Museum Hohenems (Austria) in cooperation with the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial and redesigned for our museum. Soon the last witnesses of National Socialist persecution and atrocities, the last survivors of the concentration camps will no longer be alive. What they leave behind, however, is a large amount of video interviews in which they tell of their survival. The exhibition takes a closer look at these interviews. It shows how memory is conveyed and how remembering is shaped by the interviewers. The excerpts we show in the exhibition come from contemporary witnesses from Augsburg and Swabia. The exhibition takes a closer look at the history of contemporary witnessing and asks what the future will look like without contemporary witnesses. Alongside other projects such as that of the Shoah Foundation, we are focusing on the second generation. Some of you have provided material for this, for which we thank you very much! The exhibition



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MEET THE STAFF

We are pleased to profile a different staff member of the Jewish Museum in each issue. The local interviews are conducted by Michael

Bernheim, a descendant of the Bernheim family who lives in Augsburg.

Meet Anton Limmer

Introduction: My name is

Anton Limmer. I am responsible for communications and public relations. I joined the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia during the fresh shock of the pandemic in April 2020.

But it was the right time for enhancing communications via social media. Over time I took over the entire agenda from Torsten Lattki who left the museum in December 2020. I have studied law, and while being at university, found the time to work as an actor at an independent theater. I continued as a free-lance cultural manager which brought me in contact with history and remembrance culture. When I saw the job opening at the museum, I applied for it.



What is your role at the museum? I oversee communications between the museum and all stakeholders involved. The use of online media has been largely intensified. I also have to work closely with all the different sectors of the museum, be it the curators or the educational department. And I have good regular contacts with the Jewish community and with the DJCA.

What do you like best about your work? It is the great diversity of tasks. And I am constantly required to do research which often brings up surprising results.

How did you get interested in German Jewish history?

The history of the German culture from the 18th through the first decades of the 20th century is rich in contributions from Jewish artists. And then, there is a sudden drop. This insight made me dig deeper.

What do you feel is the most important aspect of the work being done by the Museum and the DJCA?

We have to bring Jewish history and the present Jewish life closer to German society. The DJCA is essential for preserving the memory of the Augsburg Jewish community which formed in the 19th century and was destroyed by the Nazis.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

Play the guitar.

What is your favorite food? Hummus.

What is your favorite travel destination? Italy for the food, Berlin is always great, and the UK. It is hard to choose just one place. I am not especially fond of the typical beach holidays.

What superpower would you like to have? Being able to stretch time in order to have more of it. ☘

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We immigrated from Israel to the United States in 1954. I applied and was granted German citizenship in 2017/2018. I live in San Francisco with my wife Ellen. We have two children, Max and Gabe who visited Augsburg with me in 2012 and 2019, respectively.

Here are the reflections I wrote in November 2006:

As the St. Stephan's High School chamber group began playing the Hayden symphony and their beautiful music filled the vast Golden Hall of the Augsburg "Rathaus" (City Hall), I thought about the members of my family, the Binswangers. I imagined them walking into the room and sitting down in the front row where the city, state, and religious dignitaries now sat. We were gathered to dedicate the opening of the new permanent exhibit of the "Jüdisches Kultur Museum" (the Museum of Jewish Culture), commemorating Jewish life in Augsburg, Germany going back allegedly to the Roman times and first documented in the early 13th century.

The Binswangers arrived in Augsburg in 1865 and subsequently flourished in their new home until after Hitler's rise to power. Those lucky enough to get entry visas to other countries emigrated, however many were not so fortunate and never made it out of Germany. In early 1939, the remnants of the family business were forcibly "sold" to Aryan owners and their apartments were taken over. We all know the tragic ending to this story.

With this as background, I struggled with ambivalence as I tried to decide whether to go to Germany and attend the museum dedication. My feelings were a tangled mixture of both wanting to honor the memory of those who came before me while not contributing to the absolution of the Germans of Augsburg. A simple request that some of us received from the museum's assistant curator for a photo of Binswanger family members, "So we could show that there are still many descendants today even though (despite) the Holocaust," tweaked my sense that the museum and this event were perhaps primarily intended to make the local population feel better about their past. I wondered if this request wasn't merely a subtle way of observing that the Binswangers were again a large happy family, and that therefore perhaps the Holocaust hadn't really been that bad for the family after all.

In my struggle with these feelings, I picked up a copy of *From the Kingdom of Memory*, by Elie Wiesel. In his essay titled, "When Memory Brings People Together," Wiesel says something that crystallized my feelings and resolved my ambivalence.

"Still, not all citizens who were alive then were guilty. As a Jew, I have never believed in collective guilt. Only the guilty were guilty. Children of killers are not killers, but children. I have neither the desire nor the authority to judge today's generation for the unspeakable crimes that were committed by that of Hitler. But we may – and we must – hold it responsible, not for the past, but for the way it remembers the past. And for what it does with the memory of the past."

I came to understand how important the creation of the "Jüdisches Kultur Museum" and its dedication ceremony really were, and I embraced being a participant in this event. I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the wonderful job that was done in bringing the richness and memory of the lives of Augsburg's Jews to all who visit the museum.

An Unexpected Reunion

By Deborah Sturm Rausch. Deborah is the daughter of Walter Sturm, granddaughter of Anna and Max Sturm, great-granddaughter of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld, and a descendant of the Heilbronner/Steinfeld families of Augsburg. She lives in Upstate New York.

There are many stories of reconnecting with family that happened because of the Museum's efforts to trace and preserve the Jewish family histories of Augsburg. Those include new and rekindled connections in my own family, which I treasure. In addition to some very moving and personal connections made with family now living in Germany and England, I was genuinely moved by one unplanned and unexpected reunion.

When my father's family vacationed before WWII they nearly always went to the Ruchti Villa, in Bad

Faulenbach in Füssen, Germany, very close to the Austrian border. My Dad told my siblings and me many stories of time spent skiing and hiking with the whole family there. In fact, they went there so much, that the Ruchti family, which began managing the place in 1908 only six years after it was built, became close friends and part of their "extended" family.



The Ruchti Villa prior to WWII.

My kids, Becca, Rachel, Rachel's spouse Jo, and I visited Germany in 2017 for the 100th Anniversary of the Synagogue of Augsburg, and one day we headed south to visit Neuschwanstein. Out of curiosity, we took a detour to the nearby town of Füssen. I wanted to see if the place still exists.

Indeed it does! At first we were only going to take a photograph outside the building, which is now called Ruchti House. But curiosity got the better of me, and I headed inside to the front desk to inquire about the current ownership. The guesthouse had been expanded to a hotel with much more space, but the lobby and other areas were original. Turned out, the Ruchti family still owns it!

So, I asked, "Is anyone from the family here now?" I then explained that I was from a family that had spent time vacationing there before WWII.

The person at the front desk hesitated, and then said, "Yes. He is out tending to the chickens. I will get him."

We waited. And waited. After what seemed a very long time, a tall, strong, silver-haired man, with twinkling blue eyes and a ruddy complexion appeared. We looked at each other. His large stature was intimidating, and there was an awkward moment. I took a deep breath and extended my hand.

"Hello," I said in English. "I am Debbie, the daughter of Walter Sturm, granddaughter of Max and Anna, and great-granddaughter of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld."

Tears welled up in his eyes, and his weathered face softened. "I remember your family," he said in very broken English. "I never met them, but my parents and grandparents talked about them like they were family. So

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I feel like I knew them personally.”

I replied that my experience was the same. And then we hugged. It was a truly magical moment!

The next hours were spent with our families getting to know each other. We sat together, told stories, laughed, and had such a wonderful and touching time. He showed us through the large front window where my father had fallen and broken his arm while skiing there as a child, and where the family used to hike. There were stories of my father's childhood I had never heard before. I was totally fascinated!

Then he insisted that we have something to eat. We couldn't say no. So, we sampled his specialty of the house, chicken soup, which was absolutely delicious, seasoned with lovage, which grows wild on the property. And then, of course, dessert.

When his daughter, Stefanie Baier-Ruchti, the current hotel manager, arrived, he quickly brought her into the conversation. She speaks fluent English, so she was



Hermann Ruchti and I toast to our newly discovered connection, and to the memories of our families.



L-R: Hermann Ruchti, Stefanie Baier-Ruchti, Deborah Sturm Rausch, Becca Rausch, Rachel Wisch, Jo Wisch

able to translate and verify our understanding of what her father had been telling us. Hermann said a few things that really touched my heart – apart from the family remembrances. He talked about life from his perspective as a young German child during the war and after. His father had been drafted into the Wehrmacht and was forced to fight in the general army. Though they had tremendous pride in Germany, the family had close Jewish friends, and took chances to help and protect them when possible. My own family had continued to spend time there even after it was no longer permitted. They just could not understand or abide by the hate. That didn't change the fact that his father left to fight and was killed during the war. He remembered being in kindergarten immediately after the war ended and looking around the classroom. He and most of his friends grew up without their fathers. I had never really given much thought as to how what happened in Nazi Germany affected the non-Jewish German young children at that time or immediately thereafter, and to hear this story from him opened my eyes to a different perspective on the devastation of war - - particularly this war. He, like many Germans today, continuously apologized on behalf of his country for what

had happened, especially to my family. Then he said that he was also profoundly ashamed about his first name. Hermann, he said, was associated with Göring. He looked down and could not meet my eyes at that time.

We found it very hard to break away and ended up spending the entire remainder of the day, more than five hours, with the Ruchti family. We discovered connections we didn't know we had, and for Hermann I believe some healing occurred. We were treated - - and felt like - - dear friends. I am certain my Dad felt the same way when he was a kid.

This unplanned, yet truly incredible experience made a huge impression on me. Our conversation and the time we spent there deeply touched all four of us, and we will never forget it.

Visiting the Augsburg Synagogue in 2009

By Richard Mayer, a writer and musician living in Monterey, California. He is the son of Julius Mayer and nephew of Ludwig Mayer, who grew up in Augsburg.

The fact that in 2009 we were even at the Augsburg synagogue in the first place is directly attributable to Gernot Römer, once again – the same fellow who had helped Uncle Ludi publish his book, which in turn led to my reexamination of my German family ties, eventual German citizenship, and our entrée into this strange little world in the family seat of Augsburg.

Several years before, after I had contacted Gernot to introduce myself as the last Mayer, he suggested that Norma, my wife, and I might be able to do a concert at the synagogue, which would have been the farthest thing from our minds at the time. So, he passed us along to Benigna Schönhagen, then the director of the Augsburg Jewish museum. Eventually, Benigna arranged a concert in the synagogue for us, to be held on September 6, 2009.

On a trip to Paris in April 2009, we got in touch with Gernot and arranged to take the train over to Augsburg for several days. This would be my first visit there since the early 1970s and Norma's first ever. And we would meet Gernot in the flesh for the first time, too.

The train pulled into the Augsburg “Bahnhof” on a blustery, sleeting evening. We dragged our suitcases across the square to the hotel and settled in for the night. The next morning, Gernot came by and immediately took us around the corner to the synagogue, where we were buzzed in by a guard in a booth at street-side and caught our first glimpse of the edifice where my ancestors spent many an hour.

Flash forward to September 2009. We were standing in the lobby of the building originally constructed during World War I to be the main Augsburg synagogue. This imposing structure, a mix of art nouveau and Oriental architecture, now housed a Jewish Culture Museum along with the growing congregation in its labyrinth of corridors and secluded suites.

Norma and I had performed a concert the day before in the meeting room of the synagogue, which had been attended by an enthusiastic full house. As we set up for the concert, we started to sense that the audience was mostly made up of Russian-speakers – a sense that we were almost back in the former Soviet Union, where we had performed frequently in the past. And, in fact, after the concert I had been interviewed entirely in Russian by

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one of the ladies who worked on the synagogue newsletter.

We ascended the grand stairway from the lobby that led to the museum's glass door on the second floor. Accompanied by Irina (the receptionist), we went on to the third floor where we entered the synagogue's administrative suite with its curving mahogany reception



Richard and Norma Mayer perform together at the Augsburg synagogue on September 6, 2009

counter and, behind it, a phalanx of young women at their desks, bent over stacks of papers.

Irina switched into Russian and told one of the secretaries that Gospodin Mazo was expecting us. We were ushered into a spacious office, also mahogany-lined. There at a desk sat Alexander Mazo, a middle-aged Russian man, who had been president of the Augsburg synagogue congregation since 2005.

"Please take a seat," he said in heavily accented German, as he moved from behind his massive desk to a short conference table in the middle of the room.

It should be noted here that there were very few, if any, actual German Jews still in attendance at the Augsburg synagogue. Of course, the ones who weren't ultimately lost in the Holocaust had already emigrated to the far corners of the earth, never to return to Germany to live after what had happened. After World War II, the gutted synagogue building had housed transient refugees and "displaced persons" from Eastern Europe, some of whom stayed in Augsburg for good and gradually assumed control of the premises, which underwent a long restoration and finally reopened as a house of worship in 1985.

By now, the congregation was vastly larger than at any time in its entire history, thanks to an influx of Russian Jewish immigrants that started in the 1990s and was evidently the result of governmental policy and deal-making between Russia and Germany after the fall of the Soviet Union. The flow of Jews from Russia to the West had in effect changed direction somewhat in order to restock Germany's Jewish population, which was almost non-existent after the war and the Holocaust. And so, the Russian Jews in Augsburg had taken over the place where my ancestors used to worship once upon a time.

Preserving and Connecting

By Rick Landman, son of Henry Landman (1920-2014). He resides in New York City.

After the liberation of Augsburg, the U.S. Army asked my father Henry to assist in finding a new president of the Jewish community. But they couldn't find any Jews left in Augsburg. Henry recommended Robert Bachner, a Christian, to be the new leader since he was married to Gerta who had survived as a "Mischling" (part-Jew under the Nuremberg Laws). And they agreed. My father then kept in touch with the Bachners until their deaths. Later he

met Gernot Römer, who wrote many books about the Jews of Swabia, and they became good friends and worked together on many projects.

I served as my father's secretary and travel companion on all of his trips and projects. I have a long and strong link to that generation of "Augsburgers".

In 1985 I went with my parents on a

At Right: The family with Gernot Römer; Below: The family with the Bachners



"Roots Visit" to see all the hometowns of my ancestors, including Augsburg. Later we came for the Rededication of the Synagogue and for several Kristallnacht (November pogrom) programs where my father would give a speech. At the end of one of the talks, my dad challenged the Mayor of Augsburg to build a memorial for the Jewish "Augsburgers," so we returned again for that dedication ceremony. Sadly, most of these people have died, but I now have many new "Augsburger" friends, either through Facebook or through the staff changes over the years at the Museum, etc.

In 2005, I donated a Torah (that my mother's father brought to America) to Congregation Beth Shalom in Munich, where Joseph, my father's father, grew up before moving to Augsburg. That was when I decided to become a dual citizen and even started a Jewish contingent for the Steuben Parade in New York City.

Currently, I am reaching out to the museum in Uffenheim where my mother's father was born to donate Judaica to that city if they make a permanent exhibit to the Jews who lived in that region for centuries. I plan to make it in memory of my "Opa" (grandfather) and "Oma" (grandmother). I now have several good friends throughout Germany who have helped with various Jewish memorial projects representing the different sides of my family in several cities.

The biggest connection or lesson in life that I have gained from my father and my "Augsburger" friends is one of being able to love one's neighbors even if their ancestors were horrible. I have no children, so it is important for me to make sure that all the German Judaica that my grandparents brought to New York City finds a good home for the future. It's also important that the stories, lessons, and videos are preserved. That is why I wrote my memoir which can be found at www.infotrue.com/book.html and I am starting various storytelling experiences to reach out to the next generation about being a gay son of two German Jewish refugees. ❧

In 1933, Wolfgang and my father Erhard were enrolled at the St. Stephan classical grammar school in Augsburg, managed by a Benedictine monastery. I do not remember my father ever mentioning Wolfgang. But he did make the point that Jewish students were welcome at St. Stephan and were well treated. We have reason to believe that Wolfgang indeed found a home there and, furthermore, began to identify with the Benedictine life, since, at some point, he decided to become a Benedictine himself.

However, further developments in Germany made his life very difficult. After the pogrom in November 1938, Jewish pupils were no longer allowed to attend schools, except those organized by Jewish communities. His father fled to Zürich. His new wife and their two children, Wolfgang's half-siblings, followed. Wolfgang did not have an emigration permit. Why, we do not know. It could well be that he preferred to stay at St. Stephan in the boarding school, where he had been living since 1937, rather than joining the family. But with the school closed for him and his father away in Switzerland, he had nowhere to go. For a few months, his Aryan stepmother was able to take care of him in an interim apartment in Munich. Then Wolfgang's mother, living in Cologne, was able to make arrangements so that he could join a Dutch Benedictine monastery in Vaals, a small town at the German border, a few kilometers from Aachen. After graduating high school in 1941, he entered the Benedictine Order as a novice with the name of brother Paul. One year before, the Germans had occupied the Netherlands. In July 1942, the Dutch Christian churches sent a telegram to the German military authorities protesting the deportation of 100,000 Dutch Jews. The text was also publicly read in Catholic services on July 26. In retaliation, the Germans decided to deport Catholics with Jewish ancestry first and immediately. Wolfgang was affected by this decision. In August, he was notified by the German occupation forces to report to a certain location outside the monastery. He was brought to the Westerbork Camp and, from there, deported towards Auschwitz. Thirty miles before the train reached its destination, it stopped, and all employable men were selected and taken to the Sakrau labor camp. There he was killed by the inhumane working conditions, probably in October or November 1942. In June 1945, Wolfgang's mother received a visit from a Sakrau survivor and witness of Wolfgang's death.

A fellow novice in the Vaals monastery had contacts in the Dutch resistance. They offered to organize Wolfgang's escape to Switzerland. The monastery's abbot, however, did not favor this option. He was afraid of German retaliation measures against the entire monastery. He urged Wolfgang not to flee, but to turn himself in. (Quite recently, letters were found showing that before the situation escalated, the abbot had contacted the Vatican and Swiss monasteries trying to find a safe place for Wolfgang, but to no avail.) All this confronted 18-year-old Wolfgang with a terrible dilemma. He decided to sacrifice himself. His fellow novice accompanied Wolfgang to the place from where

the bus departed for Westerbork, constantly trying to persuade him to flee. But Wolfgang remained firm in his decision.

We do not have any documents written by Wolfgang. Therefore, it is next to impossible to know how and why he came to this decision. Yet, with all due caution, one may understand his thinking by studying the life and fate of Edith Stein which has been thoroughly researched and documented. She was arrested at the same time as Wolfgang, deported via Westerbork to Auschwitz-Birkenau, albeit in a different transport, and murdered in the gas chamber shortly after her arrival. Her life and Wolfgang's have essential elements in common: both were Jewish, German, and members of Christian orders. Edith, of course, was more than thirty years older, a philosophy scholar, experienced, and mature. It would lead beyond the scope of this short description to do justice to Edith Stein's motives. However, it seems fair to conclude, that she consciously died for the Jewish people, as a believing Christian, and as atonement for the crimes committed by her fellow Germans.

Seventy-five years after Wolfgang's death, Albert Eichmeier, an Augsburg teacher, found his name on the internet, and found enough reliable information in the archives, that the installation of a Remembrance Post became possible (see **Connections**, December 2018).

Since then, I have attended several projects and events involving young people, one of them in Wolfgang's old high school. The story is very tangible for teenagers who can identify with him. They see the growing popularity of right-wing positions in today's Germany. They realize that they must speak up and act to help prevent what happened to Wolfgang from happening again.

On May 23, 2021, in Augsburg's Pfersee district, the naming of a small street "Wolfgang Bernheim-Weg" gives Wolfgang an earthly home. He also lives on in the hearts of those to whom his life serves as an example. His short life may not have been in vain after all. ☞



Unveiling of Wolfgang Bernheim-Weg Street showing (L-R) Minister Franz Götze of the Pfersee parish, Michael Bernheim, Mayor Eva Weber (Photograph by Annette Zoepf)

Printed with permission from Michael Bernheim

"Incident" on Ulmerstrasse 154, Kriegshaber, Augsburg - 31st May 1939

Co-authored by Michael Feller of Augsburg (born 1963), grandson of Mrs. Anna Feller of Kriegshaber, and Steven Anson of Glasgow (born 1948), grandson of Mrs. Ida Einstein of Kriegshaber. The authors acknowledge the assistance of Miriam Friedmann in writing this article.

On 31st May 1939, Mrs. Anna Feller and Mrs. Ida Einstein rode on the tramway coming from downtown Augsburg to the suburb of Kriegshaber where they lived.

They knew each other very well. When Mrs. Anna Feller, born Orthofer in Kriegshaber, married Dr. Otto Feller, a teacher of German, history, geography, and Spanish, in 1920, they were given a flower vase as a wedding gift from the Einstein family. (The Feller family still possesses this vase today.) The two families were neighbors on Ulmerstrasse.

When the two ladies got off the tram together at the same stop, Ida Einstein was carrying a large heavy suitcase. Anna Feller offered to help Ida carry the suitcase.

This "incident" was seen by a neighbor, Mr. B., who knew both persons well. He reported that he had observed an Aryan (Anna Feller) helping and showing kindness to a Jew (Ida Einstein) to both officials of the local Nazi Party, and to the German Red Cross where Anna worked and where Ida and other Einstein family members volunteered. This was a dangerous and forbidden act.

A couple of days later, Anna Feller received a letter (pictured here) dated 30th June 1939 from the German Red Cross. In it, she was informed that she was expelled from the German Red Cross because of her behavior in this "incident" and was ordered to give back her Red Cross badge and ID card.

On 18th July, Anna Feller received a letter from Nazi Regime officials of the city government which ordered her to show up at their office two days later (20th July) to be reprimanded.

This was quite a serious situation for the whole family and there was even the danger that this "incident" would be published in the "Der Stürmer" newspaper, the worst anti-Semitic newspaper in Germany at this time.

On 20th July 1939, Anna Feller received a letter formally expelling her from the National-Socialist Women's Organization

On 13th October 1939, Anna Feller received a warning for her actions.

This example shows how smoothly the machinery of a totalitarian system worked. Such a small, insignificant "incident" was made into a large disciplinary event. This illustrates how terrifying it was for a single person, family, or small group to go against the system of the totalitarian State. Even acts of kindness to the "wrong" people could land not only you but also your friends and family in a great deal of trouble.

There is a story that, as the war started to go badly for Germany and they were short of nursing staff, German authorities approached Anna's husband Otto with a proposal. They said that if his wife would apologize "by writing a letter of apology," they would allow her to return to service in the German Red Cross and the NS Women's Organization. Anna's husband Otto answered, with his strong Franconian accent (he was born in Wuerzburg): "As far as I know my wife, from where she got kicked out, there she will not return".

After the war, when Mr. B. was challenged and asked to explain his actions, he lamely said it was because he was afraid that he could have been in trouble himself for observing an incident and not reporting it.

So how did this remarkable story come to light?

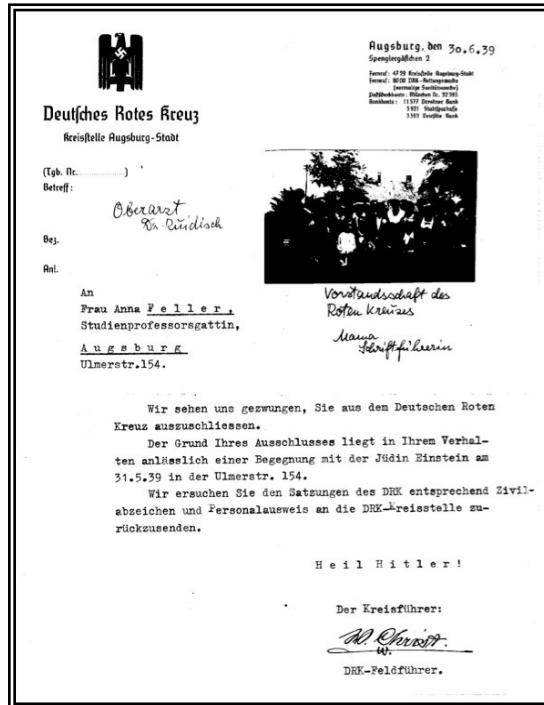
Miriam Friedmann and Friedhelm Katzenmeier from Augsburg decided to make a documentary film called ***It was all Legal*** with film producer Josef Pröll (the film is available on demand at <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/itwasalllegal/499873467>). The film tells the story of Miriam's Jewish families, Friedmann & Oberdorfer from Augsburg, who prior to 1933, were known and respected business-men throughout Germany and Europe. They were forced by the Nazi regime to sell their companies and valuable real estate vastly under value.

Michael Feller has known Friedhelm Katzenmeier for over 40 years and later got to know Miriam through her marriage to Friedhelm. One day Michael mentioned to them the story of his grandmother Anna Feller and related details about the

above "Incident in Kriegshaber" as well as the supporting documentation which he had found amongst old papers. Miriam, Friedhelm, and the producer of the film, Josef Pröll, all recognized the significance of this "Event," which further demonstrated the inhumanity of the Nazi Regime. Michael cooperated with them on this segment in the film.

The English dubbed version of the film ***It was all Legal***, was screened via Zoom by the Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg. In preparation for the event, Diane Castiglione, the great niece of Ida Einstein, explained that relationship to Miriam. One thing led to another, and Diane arranged a Zoom meeting so that she, Michael Feller, and Steven Anson, Ida Einstein's grandson, could meet. Both Michael and Steven were also invited to comment on this incident as part of the film discussion. And thus, amazingly, through this film the grandsons of the two personalities of the story were now introduced and developed a new-found friendship reflective of that between their families so long ago.

Editor's Note: Four letters were submitted with this piece, however due to space constraints, we were only able to include one of them. If you would like to see the others please write to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com and we will be happy to email them to you. Thank you.



Anna and Benno Arnold Remembered in Holzhausen, Lake Ammersee

By Elisabeth Kahn, Berlin

It took 83 years, but finally, the property called “Seven Oaks,” which once belonged to Anna and Benno Arnold but was taken by force by the aryanization effort of the Nazi Regime, has received the recognition it deserves. The path to commemorating the lives of Anna and Benno Arnold was not an easy one, but those who worked hard to achieve it saw their vision become a reality after the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia got involved. A square located at the former family retreat has been renamed, and an informative stele was unveiled on the public grounds in front of the Bayerische Verwaltungsschule (BVS), a training center for educating civil servants housed at the Bavarian Administrative School.

In a ceremony on July 30, 2021, a stele giving the property’s history was unveiled in front of the former lakeside estate that once belonged to Anna (née Kahn - 1882-1942) and Benno Arnold (1876-1944) in Utting-Holzhausen on Lake Ammer (about 45 minutes drive from Augsburg). During the National Socialist period, “Seven Oaks” was a place of respite for the family and many of their friends.



Anna and Benno Arnold's Lake Ammersee house, late 1920s

EDITOR'S NOTE: The tragic story of Anna and Benno Arnold is eloquently captured in the stele. The full text can be found in the box (right).

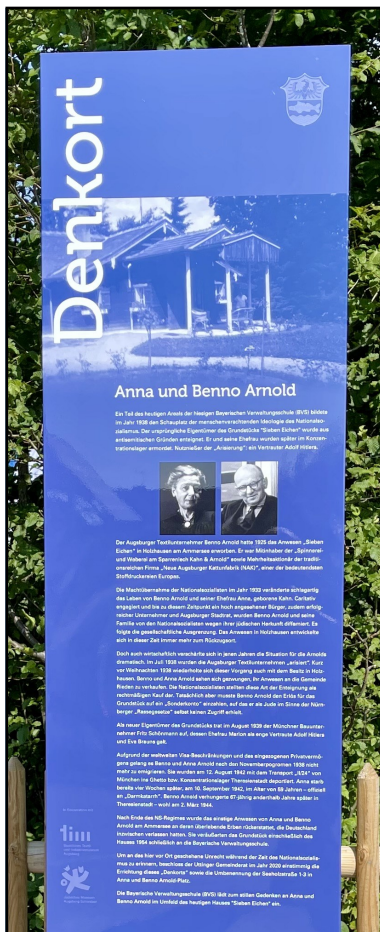
Finally, the BVS under Dr. Franz Dirnberger has acknowledged the site's history during the NS Regime.

Relatives, friends, and dignitaries who gathered at the event provided a clear message about the achievement. Excerpts from their remarks follow.

Eva Eckert, the 94 year-old niece of Benno and Anna Arnold who now lives in New York City said, “Some of my fondest childhood memories are of Holzhausen on the Ammersee where I spent summers... surrounded by loving family and friends. Anna... and Benno Arnold were more like grandparents to me — Anna being 16 years older than my mother. We were very close. They spoiled me!

To this day, I often reminisce about all of these (and many more) love-filled times that I enjoyed with my family at our (former) summer home on the Ammersee.”

Continued on Page 10



The Memorial Stele ©Michael Sauerteig (permission granted)

The stele reads:

In 1938, a section of the present-day area belonging to the local Bayerische Verwaltungsschule (BVS) was a setting for the inhuman ideology of National Socialism. Due to antisemitic measures, the rightful owner of the property “Seven Oaks” was disposed. He and his wife were later murdered in a concentration camp. Beneficiary of the “aryanization”:

In 1925, Benno Arnold, a textile entrepreneur from Augsburg, had acquired the estate “Seven Oaks” in Holzhausen at Lake Ammer. He was a co-owner of the Spinning and Weaving Mill at Sparrenlech, Kahn & Arnold as well as a controlling shareholder of the renowned “Neue Augsburgische Kattunfabrik” (NAK), one of the important textile printing companies in Europe.

In 1933, the life of Benno Arnold and his wife Anna, née Kahn, changed overnight due to the National Socialists seizure of power. Up until then, they were very much involved with charity work and a highly respected citizen, more over a successful entrepreneur and member of the municipal council of Augsburg, Benno Arnold and his family were defamed by the National Socialist due to their Jewish ancestry. Social marginalization followed. During this period the estate in Holzhausen evolved into a safe haven.

During these years, the economic situation, and measures against the Arnolds’ worsened dramatically. In July 1938, the textile companies were forcibly “aryanized”. Shortly before Christmas 1938, the same procedure was repeated with the estate in Holzhausen. Benno and Anna Arnold found themselves forced to sell their property to the local community of Rieden. The National Socialist depicted this kind of confiscation as legitimate sale. In actual fact, Benno Arnold was forced to deposit the proceeds to a “Sonderkonto”, a special account, for which he, as a Jew in terms of the Nuremberg Race Laws, did not have any access to.

Fritz Schönmann, a building contractor from Munich, appeared as the new owner of the estate. His wife Marion was regarded as a close confidante of Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun.

After the November Pogroms in 1938, often referred to by its NS term as the “Kristallnacht” (Night of Broken Glass), Benno and Anna Arnold, due to the worldwide visa restrictions and the seizure of their personal assets, did not succeed with their emigration efforts. They were deported 12 August 1942 with transport “II/24” from Munich to Theresienstadt Ghetto. Anna perished only four weeks later at the age of 59 on 10 September 1942 – officially due to “intestinal catarrh”. One and a half years later, Benno Arnold died of starvation at age 67 in Theresienstadt Ghetto – possibly 2 March 1944.

Following the end of the National Socialist Regime, the former estate of Anna and Benno Arnold at Lake Ammersee was restituted to the surviving community of heirs who had fled Germany. They sold the property including the building to the Bayerische Verwaltungsschule in 1954.

In 2020, the local council of Utting voted unanimously to rename Seeholzstraße 1-3 to “Anna and Benno Arnold-Platz” and to erect a “Denkort”, a space for thought, in commemoration of the occurred on-site injustice during the time of National Socialism.

Within the surroundings of today’s house “Seven Oaks”, the Bayerische Verwaltungsschule (BVS) invites you for a placid tribute to Anna and Benno Arnold.



(L-R) Ernestine und Elisabeth Kahn with Mayor of Utting Florian Hoffmann at the July 30, 2021 dedication of the Holzhausen on Lake Ammersee Memorial for Anna and Benno Arnold. ©Roettig (permission granted by Elisabeth Kahn)

Dr. Karl Murr, Director of the Textile and Industry Museum, said, "I am very pleased that we can stand here today to establish a lasting memory....Therefore, it is our task every day to use this memory to stand up for humanity, for compassion and against the exclusion of minorities.

Margit Hornler-Spindler, Deputy County Commissioner in the Landsberg District, said, "It may therefore remain a comparably small sign that we may set today with the ceremonial renaming of the street and the unveiling of the informative stele. But it is precisely these many small signs of remembrance and admonition that constitute the value and strength of our culture of remembrance in its entirety. They should be a continuing reminder for the future.

Thus, in the spirit of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, I wish that this place will continue to remain alive in its commitment to educating and strengthening our democratic convictions and in speaking out together against all forms of anti-Semitism and extremism."

Gerhard Fürmetz, of the Bavarian State Archives in Munich, said, "Here the case is special, because it is not only about a reminiscent look to the past, but also about the present.... Some of you may wonder what the history of the Augsburg business families Kahn & Arnold has to do with the Bavarian School of Administration. The connection lies solely in the locality.

The several weeks of research by Dr. Ingvild Richardsen alone... have produced a wealth of new information; documents (dating back to 1920) from various archives have come to light...."

Dr. Franz Dirnberger, Chairman of the Administrative Board, BVS, said, "An educational institution such as the Bavarian School of Administration was also involved in this state at that time. It provided state and local government employees with knowledge of the laws in force at the time. It was an integral part of this system of injustice. Therefore, it is clear and must not be glossed over under any circumstances that the BVS made its contribution to stabilizing this system during the wretched years of the Nazi dictatorship....

Today... the Bavarian School of Administration is a

guarantor for the teaching of democratic and human values. It is supported by the Free State of Bavaria and all Bavarian municipalities, which my colleagues and I have the privilege of representing on the Board of Directors."

Florian Hoffmann, Mayor of Utting, said, "On June 18, 2020, the Utting municipal administration received a letter from the Jewish Museum of Augsburg and Swabia requesting that Seeholzstraße 1-3, the site of the Bavarian School of Administration, be renamed Anna und Benno Arnold Platz.

Attached to the application was a comprehensive justification and documentation about the injustice, about the crimes upon and the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold by the National Socialists during the Second World War.

After only six weeks in office as First Mayor, I was appalled by these acts and surprised that such events also happened in Holzhausen, in our tranquil Utting. For me personally, it was no question to follow this request. The local council of the municipality of Utting also immediately agreed to follow this request and to make the renaming not only an administrative act, but also a ceremonial act, a celebration.

On January 1, 2021, the formal renaming of Seeholzstraße to Anna und Benno Arnold Platz followed. A few days later, on January 27, the day of commemoration of the victims of National Socialism, the ceremonial renaming should have taken place. Unfortunately, due to the omnipresent Corona pandemic, this was not possible.... As part of the festivities, we will not be unveiling a street sign today, as that has already adorned the street since January 1. No, today we will unveil a stele, which reports, reminds and admonishes with information about the history of the property, but especially about the sad history of the Arnold family."

Rabbi Brandt said, "In the time of the Nazi tyranny, injustice, arbitrariness, racial conceit, and greed for power reigned in our country. For us older generation this is not history but lived past. Even idyllic Utting was exposed to Nazi crimes.

But only remembering and commemorating are not enough. Streets, stelae, etc. have another indispensable function. They must cast rays of light into the future and admonish and guide coming generations. It must become unmistakably clear that 'never again' must not remain a phrase for political Sunday speeches.

'Never again' must be a cornerstone, a fundamental law of our social order, which must be defended offensively with all power and commitment.

May the names Anna and Benno Arnold and the memory of them be a blessing to Utting and all who live here." ❧

JMAS Monthly Newsletter in English



JÜDISCHES
MUSEUM
AUGSBURG
SCHWABEN

Did you know that JMAS' monthly newsletter is available in English? To subscribe to the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) newsletter please send an email to

office@jmaugsburg.de and indicate whether you would like to receive the newsletter in English or German.



Ask the Historian

will appear periodically as a way to provide greater context to the history of Augsburg's Jewish community.

It will primarily focus on the 1800s and pre-World War II years. We will be working with the professional staff of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia to respond to your questions about Augsburg's history, so please feel free to submit them to us at any time at djcaugsburg@gmail.com

Q - Could you please discuss the history and importance of the Jewish cemetery in Kriegshaber?

The following was provided by Souzana Hazan, Curator, and Magdalena Paschke, Provenance and Inventory Manager, Jewish Museum Augsburg Schwaben

A - In the middle of a quiet residential area on the western edge of Augsburg lies the 400-year-old Kriegshaber Jewish Cemetery. It was established in 1627 by the Jewish communities of the then independent villages of Kriegshaber, Pfersee, and Steppach in an



Kriegshaber Jewish Cemetery in the 1920s
© Archive of the IKG Schwaben-Augsburg

open field on the border of the Imperial City of Augsburg. After the Jewish community of Augsburg had been expelled in 1438-40, Jews did not settle in the area again until the end of the 16th century. Since they were denied the permanent right of residence in the Imperial City, they founded their communities along the trade routes to Augsburg - as in Kriegshaber. Starting from a few families, a considerable Jewish rural community developed here from the 17th century onwards, which, with 400 members, constituted the majority of the inhabitants of the village around 1730. It had all the necessary religious facilities, including a cemetery.

With more than 400 preserved gravestones, the Jewish cemetery in Kriegshaber is one of the most important Jewish burial sites in Bavarian Swabia. Until 1816, the Jews of Munich also buried their deceased here, including prominent personalities such as the merchant Wolf Wertheimer (1681-1765), who was in the service of the Bavarian electors as a so-called court Jew or court factor (a Jewish banker who handled the finances of, or lent money to, mainly German nobility and royalty). Another unique feature are the gravestones of the Swabian Ulmo-Günzburg family, which - provided with their own coat of arms - testify to the self-image of one of the most distinguished Jewish families in southern Germany.

In addition to the often magnificent gravestones, a single simple wooden grave stele has



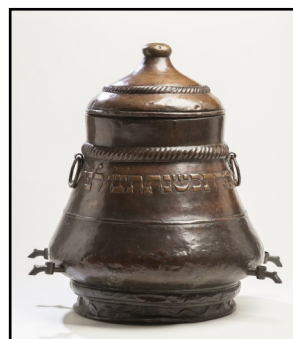
Simon ben Sanwil Ulmo Grave

also survived, which was set for Mordechai from Kassel, who was presumably murdered in 1805. The wooden stele, which is in the collection of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia and can be seen in the permanent exhibition, will be on display until February 13, 2022 in the temporary exhibition of the Jewish Museum Munich "In the Labyrinth of the Times. With Mordechai W. Bernstein through 1700 years of German-Jewish history".

From 1949 to 1951, Mordechai W. Bernstein traveled to 800 sites in Germany on behalf of the YIVO in New York in search of remnants of traces of German-Jewish culture. At the

Kriegshaber Jewish Cemetery, in addition to the rare wooden grave stele, he found other rarities that he later reported on in his publications. "I have already surveyed hundreds of cemeteries, deciphered all kinds of difficult gravestone inscriptions, recorded the most diverse stories and legends. And yet I must say that Kriegshaber is an exception," Bernstein wrote in 1955.

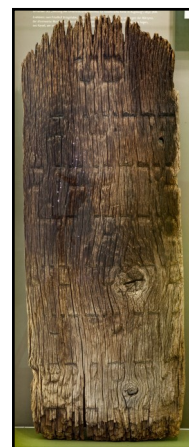
Another rarity which fascinated Bernstein is a vessel for the ritual cleansing of the hands after visiting the cemetery, which is also in the collection of the Jewish Museum Augsburg today. The copper washing basin was made in Augsburg in 1735/36, as evidenced by the Hebrew inscription "Made in the year 496 by the small count." The manufacturer of the vessel is not known. It is possible that court factors from the Jewish communities of Kriegshaber and Pfersee made it possible to finance the high-quality crafted washing basin. With its six water taps, it served the ritual hand washing prescribed in the Torah (Hebrew "Netilat Yadayim") when leaving the Jewish cemetery. The special feature of this vessel is the possibility of its mobile use. In many other Jewish cemeteries, there are permanently installed fountains for the ritual washing. In Kriegshaber, however, there was apparently no running water, so it was necessary to transport the washing basin. Its shape recalls that according to custom, in memory of the miracle-working prophet Elijah, "who poured water over Elijah's hands," water is dispensed from a jug-like container.



Jewish Wash Basin for ritual hand cleaning

As late as the 1920s, the washing basin stood in the cemetery in Kriegshaber: a photograph shows it on a small stool next to the graves. During his visit in 1948/49, Bernstein found the vessel in the Tahara house. The last burial took place shortly thereafter - in 1951 - but it is unlikely that the washing basin was still in use at that time. In 1985, under unknown circumstances, it came into the possession of the museum and can be admired today in the permanent exhibition.

The last burials in the cemetery were of Jewish Displaced Persons, Eastern European survivors of the concentration camps who stayed in Augsburg after their liberation from the camps. Since the late 1980s, the Kriegshaber Jewish Cemetery has been listed as a historical monument. ❧



Wooden Grave Stele

NEWS BRIEFS

As per the standard definition, **News Briefs** are a condensed version of a story with the specific purpose of sharing newsworthy information in a quick and efficient manner. **Please email us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com** if you have a News Brief you'd like to share. Thanks!

"Halle 116"

By Michael Bernheim, who lives in Augsburg

"Halle 116" was part of the military air traffic control installation built by the German Luftwaffe during 1935-1937 in Augsburg's Pfersee district. The building was designed as a vehicle shed. From May 1944, it was used as a satellite of a concentration camp. Up to 2000 prisoners, mostly prisoners of war and Sinti and Roma, were held there under miserable conditions. After the war, the U.S. Army took over the entire facility and named it Sheridan Caserne. The former vehicle shed received the building number 116. It is only thanks to Gernot Römer's research work in the 1980s that knowledge that a satellite concentration camp had existed in Augsburg was remembered.

After the U.S. Army left Augsburg, most of the old military buildings were torn down to make room for a new residential area and a park. It took a great effort by a Pfersee citizens' initiative to save Halle 116 from demolition. But nobody knew what really to do with it. In 2019, the City of Augsburg acquired the hall. Professor Philipp Gassert, University of Augsburg, developed a concept for the future use of Halle 116. The first phase consists of an interim exhibition right now being implemented with great enthusiasm and expertise. It will start in 2022 and will highlight the history of the building: military use by the German Airforce, satellite concentration camp, use by the U.S. Army, and, finally, its role today.

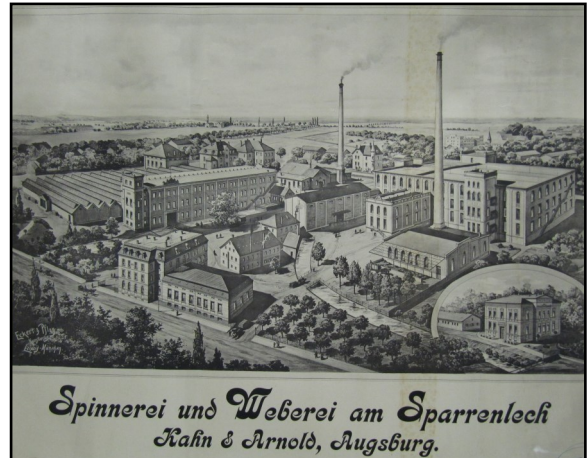
The second phase of Professor Gassert's concept is to implement a "site for remembrance and learning" in Halle 116; a permanent location for exhibitions, seminars, and events. As a precondition, this will require a full-fledged renovation of the building – insulation, heating, plumbing, etc., which will cost a seven-digit amount. As Felix Bellaire, Augsburg's Remembrance Culture manager, explained, the Jewish community and the Jewish Museum welcome the plan. But the necessary funds have still to be raised. The budget of the City of Augsburg has been plundered by the pandemic. So, every support will help.

Kahn and Arnold families featured in the Leo Baeck Institute's online exhibition "The Business of Emancipation"

On October 11, 2021, the Leo Baeck Institute of New York/Berlin launched an exhibition called "The Business of Emancipation." According to their website, "The goal of the exhibit is to tell a complex story about the economic integration of Jews into German society and its impact on their families, professions and the wider community.... The emancipation of German Jewry was not instantaneous, nor was it irreversible; rather Jews gained rights and, sometimes, lost them again throughout the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. By exploring the

commercial activity of Jews during this period through a few well-chosen examples, the exhibition will underscore the importance of the relationship between political freedom and economic liberty in a way that is historically accurate and currently relevant."

The Kahn and Arnold families of Augsburg are among the German and Austrian families featured in the exhibit. This is an excellent resource to learn about the long path to legal equality and economic prosperity for German-speaking Jews. The link to the exhibit is <https://www.businessofemancipation.org/>.



From Broken Glass and Shattered Dreams to Freedom and Family Legacy

By Deborah Sturm Rausch, Daughter of Walter Sturm and descendant of the Heilbronner/Steinfeld family

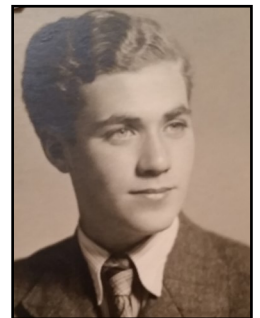
On Monday, November 8, 2021, I was honored to do a presentation via Zoom about my father, Walter Sturm's experience growing up in Augsburg, his arrest during Kristallnacht, his service to the United States army as an intelligence officer in the Signal Corp, and his ultimate success as an American immigrant.

If you're on Facebook, and would like to see the presentation, you can access it at:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=412525890377292&id=100022787890544.

It was wonderful to have a few DJCA folks on the Zoom. It struck me during the Q&A following the presentation that our story – the German descendant story – is different from the stories of other non-German descendants who went through the Holocaust. That said, it is striking that many German Jews had similar experiences in the 1930s and 40s. I always thought that my Dad's story was rather unique, but what I have learned by interacting with this fine group of people is that, while what happened to him is rare, it's not unique among German Jewry. Our story is not as often told publicly, so it's important that we tell it.

We Jekkes are connected in ways very few others understand.



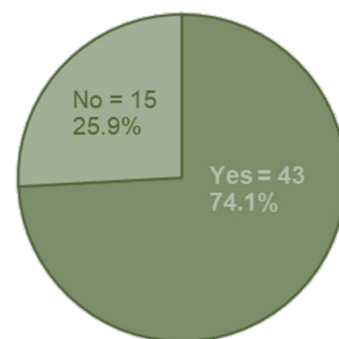
Walter Sturm, Age 16, in Augsburg, 1936.

Continued on Page 16

In the June 2021 issue, we asked, “Have you considered applying for German citizenship? Why or why not?” Because we wanted to know how our readers felt about this topic, we followed up with a brief survey. We received 58 responses from former residents and descendants. Of these, 43 people answered “Yes.” Among the common reasons for doing so were: reclaiming our heritage, bringing closure for our family, reconnecting with Germany, and responding to political events. For those in the United States, the latter meant discontent with the political environment under the Trump administration. For those in the United Kingdom, this reflected concerns about retaining access to Europe for work and travel opportunities following Brexit.

For the 15 people who responded “No,” their reasons reflected loyalty to the country that took in their family as refugees and a feeling that, due to age, there was no longer a need to reclaim citizenship. Interestingly, however, several noted that they thought it would be a good idea for their children, grandchildren, or other relatives to do so.

If anyone would like further information on whether they qualify for German citizenship, see <https://www.germany.info/us-en/-/2370240>. The comments we received may be found in the Appendix on pages 18 and 19.



Reflections on German Citizenship

From Bettina Kaplan:

Like any good long-term relationship, even a long-distance one, my liaison with my German citizenship has become more layered and profound over the years. As I gather the paperwork to renew my German passport this year, I realize how my conception of my German nationality has evolved over the last 18 years.

Opportunity

I do not know how I learned about the law granting citizenship to the victims of Nazi persecution and their descendants, but I do remember that I had no hesitation about applying. Even though my family taught us to never forget the atrocities of the Nazis, we looked at post WWII Germany positively. My mom, aunt, and grandparents believed in the importance of moving forward with gratitude. I saw obtaining German nationality as an opportunity and gift which would enable me the options to work and live in Europe which was quite aligned with my professional and language experiences. Being a French and Spanish speaker, I had more of an affinity for other countries than Germany but it did not matter as it was all the European Union. I energetically went to the German consulate's website, read the instructions, completed the application, and several weeks later, I was signing my naturalization papers - my ticket to perhaps another chapter in Europe where I had lived in my early 20s.

Alas, I never had that chapter. But today my German citizenship feels more meaningful and alive than ever. I have been regularly visiting Germany with my Bavarian born and raised husband. I even have tried to learn German for several years to be able to speak with his family. Who knew that marrying a Bavarian would lead me to support learning about my own German roots?

My grandparents passed away when I was eight and my mother was only five years old when she left Germany, so I did not know much about their lives there. The horrific parts were seldom discussed. Over the last 18 years, I have a better understanding about what my grandparents experienced. I have visited the restored homes of my

grandparents in Augsburg and in Stettin (now Szczecin, Poland), my grandmother's school in Augsburg, the graves of four generations of relatives, archives, etc. All this was possible with the help of some wonderful Germans who guided me in uncovering my family history. I could now make sense of the framed prints of Augsburg and the Kahn & Arnold textile factory on the walls of my parents' home. I look differently at the lovely porcelain displayed in the vitrine and the many photos, and I sit with pride at the expandable table with six leaves (talk about German engineering!) where we enjoyed our last family Thanksgiving meal in 2019.

Restitution, Reckoning, Responsibility

As I wait for my appointment to renew my passport this year, I now feel the true intent of Germany's decision to grant citizenship to me, and many others like me: restitution. Yet, it has given me much more. My German citizenship represents a reckoning with injustice, a sense of loss, hope, and responsibility all bundled in one document. I look at my decision to obtain German citizenship with confidence and responsibility.

Through the descendant's reunion in Augsburg (2017) and the formation of the DJCA community, I have learned about German history and have been enriched as I learn more about not only my family's story but other descendants' stories. I have made new friends not only in Germany but all over the world. Through the Obermayer Foundation, I have been involved in recognizing Germans that help preserve the history of German Jewish communities. I have participated in the unveiling of the Remembrance Post for my great grandparents at their last home in Augsburg. I even helped a student at the German School in Valencia, Spain prepare his presentation about my Augsburg family's history for his final English exam!

Certainly, my German passport went far beyond an opportunity to expand my work and living options. Now, I feel a stewardship to share our stories accompanied by the rights of German citizenship passed to me by my mother and her family; something they lost years ago.

From David Oppenheimer

I recently received my German citizenship. While it took three years and lots of documentation, I was able to use my deceased parents' right to reclaim their citizenship (they were both Holocaust survivors who moved to the United States), which passed to me upon their death. My father was from Augsburg (Ernst



Wedding reception for Bettina's grandparents, Walter and Ellen Feldberg (née Arnold), Augsburg 1932

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Recipe Corner

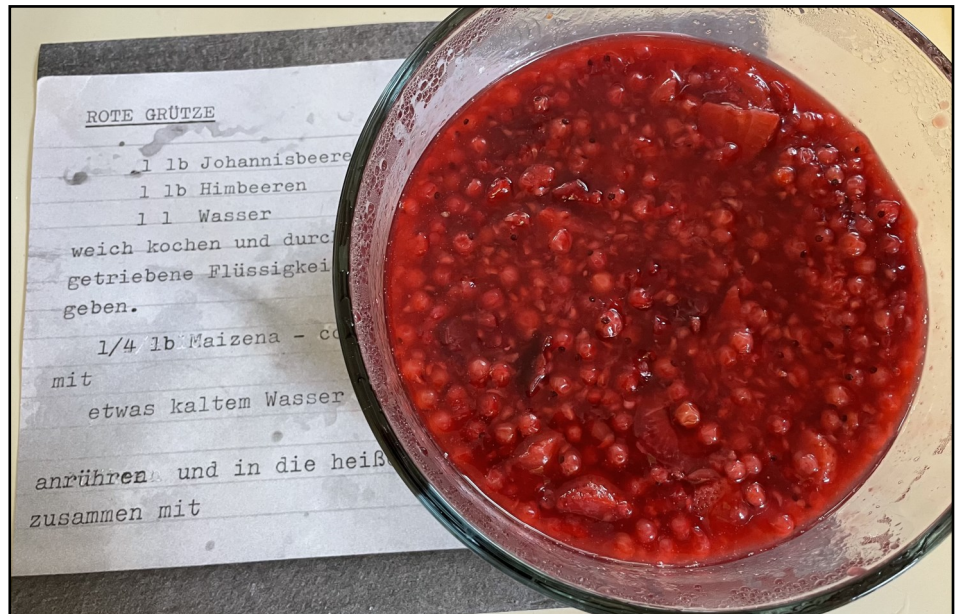
ROTE GRÜTZE

Submitted by Tom Cramer of New York and Claire Cramer Jebesen of Norway. Tom and Claire are the children of Ernst and Marianne Cramer (née Untermayer).

Note: Rote Grütze (English spelling is Gruetze) is a typical, fruit dessert from Germany, Denmark, and other Scandinavian countries. The original recipe for Rote Grütze calls for red currants (Johannisbeeren) and raspberries, but modern versions contain just about any, in-season, red fruit including strawberries, gooseberries or cherries, and you can use any combination of fruits. Sago or semolina (Griess) was originally used for thickening, which made the pudding a little gritty, hence "Grütze" or grits. Using cornstarch removes the gritty part, leaving a smooth creamy result. Marianne's original recipe is modified for an American kitchen.

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. red currants
- 1 lb. raspberries
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 4 cups water
- 1 cup sugar (depending on the sweetness of the fruits)



Original recipe card shown with the colorful and delicious Rote Grütze it yields.

Directions:

1. Boil the fruits in 4 cups of water until soft; then pass it through a sieve. (See tip 1 below)
2. Pour the liquid back into the large saucepan.
3. In a small dish, mix some cornstarch (the original recipe says 1/4 lb. but I use about a tablespoon) with a little cold water (enough to make a slurry/smooth mixture). Then, stir slurry into the hot (!) liquid together with no more than 1 cup of sugar. (I use 1/2 cup, but it can be bitter depending on the fruit you use).
4. For the best results, use a whisk to whip the cornstarch/sugar mixture into the hot fruit liquid. Whisk so that it becomes smooth and without lumps.
5. Let the whole mixture cook on low heat for about 20 - 30 minutes - stir often. Put the mixture in bowls and let it set. Serve it warm with vanilla ice cream or, if chilled or at room temperature, with vanilla sauce.

Tips:

1. I only cook half the fruit. Add the other half into the hot liquid at the very end. It will still cook a bit, but it gives you more of the textures of whatever fruit you used.
2. You can buy jars of sour cherries at Trader Joe's. They are great for Rote Grütze. Include some of the juice from the jar.



Recipes continue on Page 15

AUTHENTIC GERMAN LEBKUCHEN

Submitted by Rosemary Mark, daughter of Ralph Dreike (Dreifuss), 1922-2017.
Rosemary lives in Walnut Creek, California, and posts recipes at www.reciperoose.com.

NOTE: I'm sharing my Lebkuchen recipe that I've been making for about 20 years. As a child, I remember that my dad was always delighted to receive elaborately decorated tins of Lebkuchen in December from a friend in Augsburg. We would sometimes buy Lebkuchen during the holidays but, to our taste, it was never as good as the Lebkuchen in the tins. A friend gave me her recipe that had the right spice blend, but it wasn't the texture I was looking for. By adding a lot of ground nuts and a few other adjustments, I created this recipe that our German friends have said is the best duplication they've had. Sometimes there are still little tweaks I play with like whole egg vs. egg whites, almonds vs. hazelnuts, to get the right texture. So, you may want to try a couple of ways to suite your taste or your taste memory! Luckily, I still have many of the beautiful tins Dad received from Germany. One of them is from Café Eber in Augsburg, Dad's favorite café for Kaffee und Kuchen.

This is a honey and spice cookie laced with ground and chopped almonds or hazelnuts. The cookies are typically glazed or frosted with chocolate and in Germany are sold in beautifully painted tins. **Makes 18-24 Lebkuchen**

Ingredients:

- 2-1/3 cups all-purpose flour (300 g)
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon (8 g)
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar (140 g)
- 2/3 cup honey (200 grams) (I like clover honey.)
- 1 egg (or two egg whites for slightly lighter texture)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1-1/2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 3 cups ground raw hazelnuts or almonds, (270 g) *Note:* Almond flour is finer than ground nuts. I recommend grinding whole untoasted nuts in a food processor instead of almond flour. Trader Joe's (U.S. grocery chain) ground almond meal works well.
- 1/2 cup chopped hazelnuts or almonds (60 g)
- 1/3 cup finely chopped candied citron or candied lemon peel (56 g)
- 18-24 Oblaten (crisp, white wheat wafers) Size 90mm (3-1/2") is the typical Lebkuchen size. I like size 70mm (2-3/4") and the bite-size 50mm. Oblaten is usually available at European markets or online (Hint: If Oblaten are not available bake the rounds on parchment lined pan - the Lebkuchen will still be delicious!)
- Hazelnuts or almonds for decoration
- Powdered sugar glaze (see below) or melted chocolate

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Combine flour, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, allspice, and nutmeg in a bowl. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl of a stand mixer or food processor, combine brown sugar, honey, egg, lemon juice, and lemon zest.
4. Gradually add flour mixture, mixing until well blended.
5. Mix in ground nuts, chopped nuts, and citron. This step can be done in the mixer or with a spoon as the dough is stiff and somewhat sticky.
6. Pat dough into two flat rounds. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until chilled or up to one week.
7. On a floured surface, roll dough to 3/8-inch thickness. Cut into rounds using a biscuit cutter or glass the size of the Oblaten. Place each cut-out on an Oblaten on the baking sheet. Bake at 350°F about 15 minutes (or 325°F convection 10-12 minutes) until puffed and tops look dry.
8. Remove to wire rack and immediately brush with glaze. Press a whole nut in the center. If using chocolate, let cool before drizzling. Store cooled cookies in tins for up to several months.

Glaze:

Combine 1/2 cup powdered sugar and 1-2 tablespoons lemon juice or milk. Stir until smooth. ☼



Remembrance Posts Update

By Michael Bernheim

Since May 2017, about a dozen Erinnerungsbänder (Remembrance Posts) have been installed in Augsburg. The project was started with great enthusiasm, since the posts combined the requirements and priorities of the stakeholder groups involved.

Yet, there were some minor setbacks. For example, on some posts, the readability was poor, since the material was too dark, and some others showed clear weathering marks within weeks after the installation.

In 2019, the material for new posts was switched from tombac (a brass-like copper/zinc alloy) to heat-treated stainless steel. This improved the aging properties, but not necessarily the readability. A few "old" posts were replaced, for example, the one for the Arthur and Grete Arnold on Hochfeldstrasse, which now, after two years, shows a good over-all appearance.

The question is, "What has been done right with this one and what can we learn from it for future posts?"

I met with Felix Bellaire from the City of Augsburg's Remembrance Culture office. As he explained, thoroughly cleaning the tombac posts brought only a temporary improvement. So, the plan is to stay with stainless steel but to apply less heat treatment which results in a brighter shade. A trial version without any heat treatment is planned as well. In addition, a larger font will be used. All this should improve readability.

We must understand one underlying problem. When the concept of Remembrance Posts was adopted, a technical "off the shelf" solution was not available. A test line production would have been too expensive. "So, we must gain experience, as we go along", said Mr. Bellaire.

The good news is that to further improve the posts' appearance and durability, he keeps an eye on them, is in contact with metal-working experts, and is supported by the Erinnerungswerkstatt Augsburg (EWA) team.

Augsburg Remembrance Trails

By Michael Bernheim

Many locations in Augsburg remind attentive passers-by of the atrocities of the Nazi era. There are official buildings representing the victims, like the synagogues, or the perpetrators, like the former NSDAP (Nazi party) headquarters on Prinzregentenstrasse. Additionally, the victims are commemorated by memorial signs indicating houses where victims and their families have lived. These houses are marked by **Stolpersteine** (stumbling stones) or **Erinnerungsbänder** (remembrance posts). The term "victims" encompasses all men, women, and children who were persecuted by the Nazis for whatever reason.

For several years already, volunteers of the various organizations active in keeping the memory of the victims of the Nazis alive have been offering guided tours of these remembrance sites. These tours are called "**The Augsburg Remembrance Trails**."

Based on very positive feedback, members of the Remembrance Workshop (EWA) and the Stolpersteine Initiative now have jointly created a brochure enabling interested parties to do their own self-guided tours, thus making the concept available to a much wider audience.

The booklet contains fifty-five short descriptions of the lives of victims (individuals, couples, or families) and their

last voluntary addresses. The texts are based on the biographies in the online remembrance book (<https://gedenkbuch-augsburg.de/>). In addition, eleven special memorial sites are listed, like Halle 116, a satellite of the Dachau concentration camp located in Augsburg. The booklet also maps the different sites and proposes four different walking tours. This enables visitors who are not familiar with Augsburg geography to find their way.

The project was eligible for financial support by the federal initiative called "Demokratie leben" ("Make democracy happen").

The active promotion of the Remembrance Trail project was on hold due to the pandemic. The booklets are now available for free at the following locations:

the Tourist Information Center on the Rathausplatz, the Culture Office on Bahnhofstrasse, the Evangelisches Forum Annahof near the St. Anna church, and the Jewish Museum of Augsburg/Swabia.

Booklets can also be ordered at the e-mail address: wege-der-erinnerung@t-online.de.

Thus far, 3,500 copies have been printed. For the time being, they are in German only. But with the help of the maps, people not fully fluent in German should be able to find their way around.

The schedule of this guided tour and other tours can be found on the website <https://www.vhs-augsburg.de/programm/gesellschaft-und-kultur/augsburg/fuehrungen.html>.

Our sincere thanks go to Inge Kroll and Fritz Schwarzbäcker of the EWA and Josef Pröll of the Stolpersteine-Initiative who spent countless hours on the concept and the implementation, in addition to their various other projects.

New JMAS Director Announced

Dr. Carmen Reichert will become the next director of the Jewish Museum of Augsburg/Swabia on May 1, 2022, following the departure of Dr. Barbara Staudinger.

DJCA welcomes her and wishes her the best of luck in her new position. ¶



Dr. Carmen Reichert



We welcome your feedback!

Please send your comments, suggestions or corrections to the Editor at djcaugsburg@gmail.com.

We received wonderful feedback on our June 2021 issue. It is with thanks that we post some of it here.

From: Dan Schumm, California

I've been enjoying your newsletter and want to thank you all for the effort you have been putting into publishing it.

From Betsy Kaplan, California

Thank you for the wonderful newsletter. Delightful, inspiring, and informative.



Why is it important to have a Descendants group?

Followers of DJCA have given us feedback and thanks for the work we are doing to keep the memory and the history of our ancestors alive, which we greatly appreciate. It made us think:

why is it important to have this group. So.... ***We would like to hear your perspective on why it is important to have a Descendants group.***

Has the group in any way brought your immediate or extended family closer together? Have the discussions or articles refreshed memories you had as a survivor or as a family member of a survivor? Have you been able to more easily share what happened in your own family because of something you read in the **Connections** newsletter?

Each of us has a story. We would especially love to hear from the 20 to 45 year olds who are (hopefully) reading this newsletter. What does it mean to you to read about the history, learn the recipes, or hear about the culture of our families in Germany before the war?

Please send your thoughts to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com. If you have ideas for a future Food for Thought topic, please let us know. Thank you. ☘

Food for Thought - Continued from Page 13

Oppenheimer, son of David and Maria Oppenheimer).

Given all that is going on in the world (and the United States – while Trump was President), I felt having EU/German citizenship would be a nice alternative as we could see ourselves living in Europe one day.

It took three years – as there was a long list of people applying for citizenship (Syrian/Middle Eastern refugees), which was then compounded by Covid issues. Ultimately, I had to wait for the German Consulate in San Francisco to re-open so I could go in person to finalize my papers.

From Kim Fellner

We had a bit of an adventure on the trail of German citizenship. My siblings, nephews and I applied as a group about five years ago. We were well into the process when we were informed that citizenship rights could only be conveyed through the patrilineal line, and it was my mother who had escaped - hence we were not eligible. We were willing to contest this, and sent several letters about gender bias, etc. but were informed that the courts had already ruled.

So, we decided to apply for Austrian citizenship via my father and were encouraged to proceed.

Meanwhile, Germany did change the rules. We would be eligible, but we'd have to start the process all over. We were informed it could take up to four more years or so.

Ergo, when we were accepted by Austria, with minimal hassle, we decided to take it. So now we have Austrian citizenship instead. Sigh. ☘

Staudinger, Continued from Page 3

will be on display until June 5, 2022. It will be accompanied by an exciting schedule of events put together by our new Program Manager, Sara Sepehri-Shakib. You will also be able to visit some of the events online.

In addition, two projects were launched at our museum in the fall. "The Jewish Heritage of Bavarian Swabia" aims to digitalize objects, photos, and documents from the Jewish history of Augsburg and Swabia. The end result will be our new online collection, where you will then be able to research the Jewish Museum's collection from home and discover stories behind the objects.

In another project, we are looking into the provenance of the objects in the collection. Provenance research is not only a topic for non-Jewish museums, but also for Jewish museums. In this project, Magdalena Paschke is researching the provenance of the museum's Judaica objects. Here, too, new and exciting results are to be expected.

I hope you stay tuned to the museum! Once again, I want to thank you for your appreciation and for the many, very positive interactions I have had with you. This all means a lot to me!

Warm regards,
Barbara Staudinger

NOTE: We thank Barbara Staudinger for her efforts to support the DJCA's work during her tenure as Director, and wish her the best in her new position.



the June **Connections** issue is:

Coming in June 2022... The theme for

How Former German Citizens Contributed to the War Effort after Emigrating

During WWII, some people, mostly men who had been German citizens but lost their German citizenship under the Nazi regime, either enlisted or were drafted into the United States or other Armed Forces after they arrived in their new homeland. For example, in America, some became what was known as "Ritchie Boys," others were in the Army Signal Corps, still others, like Henry Kissinger, were in the OSS. They were invaluable to the war effort because they had first-hand knowledge of the land, the language, the customs, and traditions of Germany.

What are your family or other stories of these unsung heroes? If your family settled in countries other than the United States, how did they help the war effort there? What role did the women in your family play? Were any of your relatives partisans?

We hope you'll share your ideas and experiences with us! Please submit your article(s) to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com no later than April 15, 2022. ***Thank you.*** ☘



APPENDIX: Reclaiming German Citizenship Survey Results

Below are many of the comments regarding people's choices about reclaiming German Citizenship. Thank you to all who participated in this survey.

YES comments:

- In the UK a number of children of Jewish immigrants are applying for their parents "lost" German or Austrian citizenship as a way to give their children/grandchildren the possibility of dual citizenship. This would give the possibility of a "European" passport at a future date should they ever consider working there - a direct result of leaving the European Union. I personally thought I would never do this. However due to the welcome and friendship we have received with reconciliation and remembrance work with the Germans we have encountered, I feel my parents would be pleased with the decision to blend our Scottish and German cultures and friendships together. I understand the process takes 18-30 months - I should only live that long! ~ Steven Anson*
- The shock of Brexit made me think about it, but I don't think I will actually do it. ~ Gertrud Aub-Buscher*
- I applied for Germany re-naturalized citizenship, as I felt it was reclaiming something that was taken from my grandfather by force and without his consent. ~ Julia Rymer Brucker [descended from Richard Michael (Untermayer) Rymer]*
- I had wished we (the UK) would remain in the European Union as a moderator and adviser in terms of helping to formulate laws pertaining to civil rights and environmental issues (including those relevant to climate change concerns). I believe the Union has helped restrain those tendencies towards fascism and exclusivity. Consequently Brexit and all it has meant, in my opinion, has been an awful retrogressive step. I feel fundamentally European as well as British and, therefore, considered applying for German citizenship on the basis that my mother, Anneliese Lerchental, was Jewish and from Augsburg. I did call the German consulate in London, but that's as far as it went, partly because of the effort required to dig up the past. ~ Peter Bunyard*
- Unless you care not to visit Germany or buy German goods for your own understandable reasons, reclaiming German citizenship brings full cycle our family members' and our own experience with the Holocaust and provides you with speedy passport control based solely biometric data as well as working benefits in for Germany and the entire European Union I personally reclaimed German citizenship in 1992 but only recently started using the European passport when a German passport official asked me why I was using my US passport and not my European passport - the Governments know everything about us (Palantir at work) ~ Tom Cramer*
- To maintain proximity to heritage and to give our offspring the opportunity to enjoy similar privileges. ~ Jeffrey P. Englander*
- In my view, this was a meaningful way to help right a terrible wrong done to my ancestors. ~ Steven Felgran*
- Through their escape from Germany in 1933 my parents were stripped of their German citizenship. When my father was offered in 1960 a Professorship at the University in Munich the German government did not reinstate his citizenship and so my parents remained until their death in 2002 & 2008 American citizens. (Their story is a bit complicated. I'm happy to provide details, should you like - the gist being that my dad lost his job at the Univ. of Arkansas, where racial segregation was State law, which he opposed. Act 10 went to the US Supreme Court. It took 7 years to overturn the case against him and 4 other professors.) I was offered in the 1990's German citizenship by the German Consulate in New York. ~ Miriam Friedmann*
- I'm citizen of Switzerland. Sometimes I think it might be good to re-acquire the nationality of my parents. As I don't live in Germany I did not apply although I travel quite often in Germany. ~ Michael Guggenheimer*
- I would love to reclaim my German citizenship, it would mean a lot to me, but I can't seem to find out if I'm eligible - and don't know quite how to find that out. As Walter Landauer's granddaughter I may not be eligible as he married my grandmother and requested American citizenship in 1940 - so strangely, even though the family heritage is so tied to Augsburg, we may not ever be able to be considered German again! ~ Hillary Keegin*
- I believed it was important to "undo" what the National Socialists attempted. My Grandparents were German and it was not right for anyone to take that citizenship away from them. I felt that if we did not reclaim citizenship it was giving the National Socialists and anti-Semitism a victory. ~ Brian Klein*
- Have tried to apply but found the forms impossible to complete as they are in German and toggling between the English translation and the German is most challenging. I want my descendants to have the citizenship as risk of living in Africa may grow. ~ Philip Kuhn*
- I got my dual citizenship in 2007 after I returned a Torah back to Germany. ~ Rick Landman*
- My siblings, their children, my children and I have all been granted German citizenship. It is important to regain this part of our heritage. We also prefer to think of ourselves as Europeans, with the hope for an end to war. ~ Miriam Landor*
- My family felt it is a way to reclaim heritage. Not in a vindictive way, but it feels justified to have as we want to maintain and reconnect in Germany now and future generations. ~ Rosemary Mark*
- To bring closure to a tragic occurrence in our family history, simply put. ~ Richard Mayer*
- I have had German citizenship for over 20 years. I applied and received German citizenship because I was Jewish and being born in Germany.*
- I have applied for and have received my German citizenship. I have two primary reasons. I wanted back what was stolen from my parents, and two, I wanted an escape strategy for when this country self destructs. ~ Richard Oppenheimer*
- I never thought I would want to repatriate, but when things started to turn toward fascism in the United States after the 2016 election, I decided it was time to look into it. My ancestors were not able to leave Germany when Hitler was in power because they had no place to go. I wasn't going to let that happen again. It took some work, but after two years, my dual citizenship was approved, and I also received my German passport. My children and grandchildren, and our descendants are all entitled to German citizenship now, and I am grateful for the backup plan. ~ Deborah Sturm Rausch*
- I already claimed my German citizenship through my mother's family and I am dual citizen with US and German passports. I feel more connected to my heritage. ~ Marianne Dreike Saneinejad*

Continued on Page 19

- I applied for and was granted German citizenship and a subsequent EU passport in 2017/18. To be honest, one impetus was the election of Donald Trump and the changes to this country which I feared his election presaged. Very briefly, other reasons included an appreciation of the positive role (vis-a-vis for instance immigration, climate change, the European Union) that Germany has taken on the world stage, how its government and its citizens have embraced their responsibility for the Holocaust, and how it educates its young people about it. ~ Dan Schumm
- I reclaimed German citizenship under Article 116 of the German Constitution in 2017, the process was very straightforward and easy to manage. As a UK citizen this allows my children and grandchildren, following Brexit, to continue to have free movement, and also be able to work, within the EU without restrictions. ~ Anthony Spiro
- I feel it could be useful in the future. I still feel some connection to German culture based on my family memories. ~ Jim Stein
- My children and grandchildren wanted to get the German citizenship / maybe to study in Germany. ~ Efraim Stern
- I have considered it, but have not moved forward on it. My parents valued much of the culture of Germany, particularly the arts and philosophical heritage, which I value as well. And as we are facing migrations of refugees, Germany has been more open hearted than the US. ~ Karin Teutsch
- I did apply for citizenship and became a citizen in July 2019 along with my daughter. We applied together. Many members of my family are also dual citizens and several more have applied and have either been approved or are awaiting approval. To date, of the descendants of Rudolf Nathan and Lina Bernheim, six people have become German citizens and five have applied for citizenship. ~ Michael Silberman
- Actually applied and received it for myself and children. Done with very mixed emotions. Ultimately did when there was talk of eliminating the healthcare preexisting condition. Wanted to have access in case this became a problem.
- I applied so I could be a part of my origins - and to have EU citizenship
- Considered it due to Brexit making free movement in Europe no longer possible for British people.
- My father and uncle have already applied and had their German citizenship approved. I will probably apply eventually, although I do not intend to live in Germany.
- I lived in Germany for 5 years not knowing that I was eligible for citizenship. Applying and re-applying for residency permits was time-consuming and stressful. Although I don't know whether I will ever live in Germany again, I find it reassuring that I could do so without any logistical difficulty. I also have an elderly parent who lives in Germany. During the recent pandemic-related travel constraints, I was able to see her - and return to the US - because of my dual passport status. That alone made it worthwhile...
- The Presidency of Donald Trump lead me to want an alternative to American citizenship.
- Considering if politics in this country continue to be so divisive
- My children are in the process of doing so. The US is not as safe as it once was, and there are advantages to being able to work and/or go to school in the EU.
- I first considered this when Trump ran for office and spoke with a staffer at the German embassy, just in case I needed to leave this country. The irony did not escape me. I do keep it on a back burner but have to consider leaving family behind if I did make a move. I continue to watch elections closely and reevaluate the situation frequently.
- Because the US is in a civil war and it means I have the possibility of leaving permanently .
- Because once I became a German citizen, my children and grandchildren could become German citizens which makes them members of the EU
- To have ease of work permit status for my kids as they enter the workforce, because they then can have citizenship

NO comments:

- I was born in Germany and have lived in California since I was 6 and a half years old. My parents became U.S. citizens and automatically being a minor I received my American citizenship. I am 88 years old now and do not plan to travel any more and find no reason to obtain a German citizenship. I am 100% German, and proud to be an American. Both of my children have their German passports. ~ Betsy Feldberg Kaplan
- My citizenship and that of my extended family's, was taken away by the Nazis, but my children and grandchildren have all applied and received their German citizenship because most of current Germany has shown remorse for their Nazi history, demonstrating that the current population is not responsible for the genocide and hateful persecution of the millions of European Jews and other minorities in the past century. My family's German citizenship will simplify their intended travel and potential study and work opportunities throughout Europe. ~ Eva Lamfrom Labby
- Does not apply as we lost our citizenship when we left Germany. Our niece and grand nieces have received their German citizenship based on the ousting of their father (my brother) from Germany. ~ Henry Stern
- Having lost their German citizenship, my parents became very proud American citizens and raised my brother and me to share that pride. I am therefore loyal to the country that took in my family and gave them the opportunity to establish roots, raise a family, and build good lives for themselves. I have nothing against Germany or its people today. I enjoy my visits there and I value the relationships I've developed. German culture and tradition have indelibly influenced me. However, I am first and foremost an American citizen. Germany lost its chance to get my loyalty when it stripped my family of its rights and citizenship.
- I don't see the need for it (in spite of Brexit) as I will not be travelling abroad any more. I asked my children and nephew if they wanted me to - so they could too - but they were not interested.
- I don't want to be German.
- I am an Israeli citizen. I have no need to be a citizen elsewhere. ❄