



CONNECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AUGSBURG



5th Anniversary Edition

5th Anniversary Edition - June 2023

Volume 6, Number 1



Visiting Augsburg

Augsburg by descendants of the Jewish community, and provides a glimpse of what those experiences have meant to them and their families.

DJCA was conceived following the 2017 reunion in honor of the 100th anniversary of the synagogue. Therefore, it is fitting that, in commemoration of the 5th anniversary of **Connections**, this issue's theme focuses on visits to

Visiting Augsburg: "My Heart Laughed"

By Jeffrey L. Katz, a retired journalist living in the Washington, D.C. area, who's writing a book about the Holocaust and the German movement of remembrance and reconciliation. He's a grandson of Else and Julius Fritz Landauer and a descendant of M.S. Landauer.

"My heart laughed when I saw the city again." That's how my grandmother described Augsburg during her first visit in 50 years. It was 1988, and she and my Uncle Gerd had accepted an invitation from the city to return.

"*Ich bin mit Augsburg versöhnt*," my Omi told a reporter with the Augsburgener Allgemeine. "I'm reconciled with Augsburg." She added, "*Die Leute, die uns eingeladen haben, können nichts für unser Schicksal*"—"The people who invited us can't do anything about our fate."

So much was packed into the words "*unser Schicksal*," or "our fate." Generations of Landauers had contributed much to the city's industry, its small slice of religious diversity, and its civic life. And yet the survival of every Jewish family depended on their having the means and foresight to flee Germany while they had the chance. Thankfully, my immediate family members did so.

Last October, I finally made my first visit to the city where my mother was born and left for Cali, Colombia at age 5. Unlike my grandmother, my mom has not reconciled with Germany. It was only as my wife and I planned this trip that she suddenly wished she could join us. But nearing her 90th birthday, she didn't feel up to it.

I wanted to go because I'm writing a book about my deep roots in Germany, my family's persecution during the Holocaust, and the German movement of remembrance and reconciliation. I'd been hyper-focused on my dad's escape from Essen and how virtually his entire family was deported from North Rhine-Westphalia and murdered. I've been friends with Elisabeth Schulte-Huxel, a member of the vibrant memory movement in that region, for almost 40 years.

Having recently made a connection to the Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg, and guided by the wise counsel of Bettina Kaplan (my recently discovered long-lost cousin!), it was time to go to Bavaria.

That's how I found myself, on my 66th birthday, staring at an apartment building at Beethovenstraße 16,

the address where my family once lived, with my wife Mollie, Elisabeth, and her husband Paul at my side. I was transfixed, repeatedly taking the same picture,



Else Isner and Gerd Landauer during their visit to Augsburg in September 1988

appreciating being able to stand where my relatives did so many years ago. To be sure, it was an odd vista to focus on, which prompted a resident to wonder what exactly we were doing there. Once Paul told her, she quickly left her balcony to avoid my camera.

I have mixed emotions when visiting the land where my relatives were persecuted. But I always come down on the side that it's better to reclaim my heritage than to turn my back on it and the good people who've extended a welcoming hand. I also wanted to better understand the motives and work of current day Germans who know much more about my family's history and the Jewish community that once lived there than I do.

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- Build Community
- Preserve History
- Conduct Outreach
- Support the Jewish Museum of Augsburg/Swabia
Jüdisches Museum Augsburg/Schwaben (JMAS)

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Please note that posted deadlines for submission of articles are firm.

Information about the Jewish Museum of Augsburg/Swabia can be found at www.jmaugsburg.de and on Facebook at (<https://www.facebook.com/juedischesmuseumaugsbuerg/>).

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A Message from our Co-Chairpersons

Written by Diane Castiglione

Five years ago, Bettina, Debbie, and I felt like a strange mix of expectant parents and a new kid at school. For the previous nine months, we had laid out plans for what has become the Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg and this newsletter. Like expectant parents, we were both eager and nervous to see our new “baby.” Would we be good parents? Would our creation be everything we hoped it would be? Like the new kid at school, we worried whether anyone would like us and whether we would make new friends. Would anyone contribute to the newsletter, let alone read it?

Well, we are happy to report that our five-year-old is doing quite well! In fact, this whole experience has exceeded our expectations. We needn't have worried about whether we would have enough articles to fill an issue. The response to each call for articles is fantastic, with each issue bringing new contributors. Thanks to word of mouth and our presence on the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) website, we get a steady stream of requests to add family members, friends, descendants, and other interested people to our mailing list. We receive overwhelmingly positive feedback, including compliments on the quality of both the content and design of the newsletter (Thank you, Debbie!). And, during my recent visit to Augsburg, I learned that the museum staff has found the newsletter helpful in expanding their knowledge and understanding of the pre-war Jewish community.

This endeavor began as an outgrowth of the 2017 Descendants' Reunion. As we noted in our first issue in June 2018, then JMAS director, Dr. Benigna Schönhagen had been “the catalyst for engaging former residents and their descendants in the work of the museum.” She had approached Bettina and me about considering ways to maintain the level of interest and excitement generated by the Reunion. We are proud to feel like we have achieved that goal. When we selected **Connections** as the name for the newsletter, we knew it was the perfect choice but I don't think we fully appreciated exactly how perfect it really is. We are truly excited when we hear about a “connection” that has resulted from information shared in the newsletter or when someone finds us on the JMAS website.

This is definitely a passion project for us and we hope that you feel at least some of that passion. We look forward to continuing to provide a forum for sharing our families' stories and experiences – and building new connections – for at least another five years. ☸

From the Editor

Deborah Sturm Rausch

As noted above, this issue marks our 5th Anniversary of producing **Connections!** We are so grateful to our contributors and our readers. This is truly a labor of love that connects us with Augsburg, our ancestors, and our heritage. As a friend of mine described it, **Connections** is a living legacy - a tribute to generations past and generations to come.

We could not do this without YOU! As **Connections** attracts more and more attention, thanks to the incredible articles we receive, we have been approached by others doing similar work. Further **connections** have been made to people who are writing books, creating plays, and working on other types of programs and materials to memorialize and preserve the history of Jewish people in their hometowns. Those **connections** feel really good.

Personally, I am grateful to Diane and Bettina for taking the initiative to get this project going, and for reaching out to me to help them create DJCA and to publish **Connections**. In doing this we three have forged a solid friendship, a **connection** which, might have happened more naturally if we all had still lived in Augsburg. We hope to be able to carry on for years to come. Anyone in the next generation interested in joining us? We would love to have you on board with us!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the June 2023 issue! We invite you to contribute to our December 2023 issue with the theme of *The Power of Photos*. (See page 17 for further information). The response to the recipes we have published in our **Recipe Corner** has been fantastic! We have provided a recap of them in this issue (see page 15). Please send us your recipes so we can add to this terrific list! Want to create a memorial for your family member? See page 14 for details on how to do this.

Wishing everyone a wonderful summer! Thanks again, for all this! ☸



L-R: Diane Castiglione and Bettina Kaplan



Deborah Sturm Rausch

Letter from JMAS Director Carmen Reichert

Dear esteemed descendants of the Jewish community in Augsburg,

Throughout the relatively mild winter in Germany, the season was marked by a gentle warmth, occasionally interrupted by sharp winds, reminding us of the challenges that persist in our world. In the wake of the pandemic, we continue to grapple with the consequences of social isolation, the prolonged absence of educational institutions, and the seemingly endless hours spent working from home. Amidst this turmoil, we have also witnessed an alarming resurgence of antisemitism, fueled by the conflict in Ukraine and the proliferation of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish conspiracy myths. Thankfully, Augsburg remains relatively peaceful.

In these trying times, I am convinced that we must redouble our efforts in education and expand our offerings in teacher and guide training. While German school curricula introduce students to the basics of Judaism and the Holocaust, there is so much more to share about the rich tapestry of Jewish history in our region. Our countryside, provincial towns, and villages of Swabia hold a wealth of Jewish heritage that often goes untapped in local history lessons.

To address this, Frank Schillinger and I have forged new partnerships with several institutions that provide teacher training. In April, we welcomed to our team Christian Porzelt, a knowledgeable expert in Jewish history and culture, tasked with broadening our collaborations in the Swabia region and developing guide and teacher training alongside Frank. We envision a fruitful and enduring relationship with local influencers, as we collectively work to preserve and promote our shared history.

Our current exhibition, "*Feibelman muss weg*," delves into a historical case of antisemitism in Memmingen, a provincial town just an hour's drive from Augsburg. Curated by Monika Müller, it provides us the opportunity to discuss present-day antisemitism in Germany while examining the story of businessman Jakob Feibelman. In the 1930s, Feibelman was subjected to a barrage of threatening messages and calls that ultimately forced him into life-saving exile. By preserving these artifacts, he not only secured restitution after the war but also allowed us to shed light on a dark chapter of our past. The government-sanctioned antisemitism of that era is not directly comparable to today's situation. Looking into the past certainly reminds us to be grateful for the support of our local police and regional grantors in combating the scourge of today's antisemitism.

Moreover, it heartens me to report that the rise in antisemitism has been met with a surge of civic engagement against it. We have welcomed individuals and groups to our museum, eager to learn more about this issue and how they can contribute to the fight against antisemitism. For example, the "Junges Theater" in Augsburg has recently launched a tour of a play suitable for high school students, with Frank having provided guidance during the writing process. We eagerly



Carmen Reichert, Director

anticipate presenting this production to our audience this autumn.

With warm greetings from Augsburg, I wish you all a delightful summer filled with sunshine, enlightenment, and love.

Yours sincerely,
Carmen Reichert ✎

INTRODUCING...

Normally, we provide a profile of a different staff member of the Jewish Museum of Augsburg in every issue. However, in this issue, we are setting aside "Meet the Staff" to instead introduce you to Mr. Alexander Mazo, president of Augsburg's Jewish community, and also to provide a brief introduction to the new board members of the *ErinnerungsWerkstatt* (Remembrance Workshop). Special thanks to Michael Bernheim who conducts the local interviews featured in **Connections**. Michael Bernheim is a descendant of the Bernheim family who lives in Augsburg.

Meet Alexander Mazo, President of Augsburg's Jewish Community

Interview by Michael Bernheim

What can you tell us about yourself?

In 1955, I was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where my Jewish family with Belarusian and Ukrainian roots had fled. I studied law and worked as an attorney. In 2000, my parents came to Augsburg; I followed in 2003. I started learning German and, in 2005, I was elected a member of the board of the Jewish community and then its president.



Alexander Mazo, President of Augsburg's Jewish community

Could you tell us about the current Jewish community? How big is it? How active is it? What are the main activities?

The community has about 1,400 members. Religious life is the most important activity. Another high priority is supporting the (newly arrived) community members in their contacts with authorities. It is our experience that younger people often maintain a certain distance to the religious community whereas, as they grow older, they seek more contact. By principle, we are a traditional community; all people of Jewish faith, however, are welcome.

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We understand that many members of the current Jewish community came to Augsburg from the former Soviet Union. Approximately what percentage of the community would this group represent?

Ninety percent of the community members came from the territory of the former Soviet Union. The others are from Israel, Poland, and Germany.

What are your priorities as president of the community?

When I took over my position as president, I first had to establish structures and processes within the community, as well as restore the two existing cemeteries in Kriegshaber and Haunstetter Strasse. Soon, finding a cemetery for the future and restoring the synagogue came on the agenda. Always of high importance is caring for the religious service. Overall, my aim is that, after my time, the members of the synagogue will say our community has improved under my leadership.

How do you view your role as part of the public life in Augsburg?

The Jewish community is not as integrated into the life of the city as it was before 1933. To improve this is an important task. This must, however, not degenerate to assimilation. Religious rules are not negotiable. An example is an invitation to a public event on Shabbat.

What are your hopes regarding the synagogue renovation? What will it mean for the community?

The original intention of the architects of the synagogue shall become visible again in all its splendor. Not only, however, do we have the past in mind. In a hundred years, our grandchildren and great grandchildren shall be able to say: they have done a good job.

We understand that the restoration work has already uncovered the mikvah. What does that mean for the community? Are there other aspects of the synagogue that you hope are re-discovered?

Today, the community owns six Torah scrolls. Before the November 9 pogrom (Kristallnacht), there were thirty-eight. In addition, the community archive is missing. If, during the restoration, we will find some of that, we don't know. But we must never stop searching.

How do you see the relationship between the current community and the descendant community? How can we strengthen connections between them?

Whenever descendants of former community members visit Augsburg, they are always welcome to come and see us. Descendants who would like to meet with us are welcome to contact me. My e-mail address is vorstand@ikg-augsburg.com.

ErinnerungsWerkstatt: The Members of the New Board Introduce Themselves

by Michael Bernheim

The ErinnerungsWerkstatt (Remembrance Workshop) has recently become a legal organization with a new board. Their mission is to:

- make the fate of all Augsburg Nazi victims known among the population of Augsburg.
- research the data of the victims' lives and of the circumstances of their death, and to document this information in their online memorial book.
- involve students in this research and in writing biographies.
- encourage and support sponsors of Remembrance Posts (Erinnerungsbänder).
- organize guided tours of memorial sites in Augsburg.
- organize memorial events in cooperation with other organizations.

Each new board member has written a brief introduction and their personal motivation for being involved in the organization. We thank them for their dedication to an important and worthy cause.



*The ErinnerungsWerkstatt board members under an olive tree. (L-R) Inge Kroll, Michael Bernheim, Alfred Hausmann, Claudia Huber, Fritz Schwarzbäcker, Michael Friedrichs, Wolfgang Poeppel
Photo by Frank Schillinger*

Inge Kroll

I am the daughter of a politically persecuted father, who in 1933 was first imprisoned by the Nazis in the Esterwegen concentration camp. After more than five years on the run, he was interned in the Dachau concentration camp and, on May 2, 1945, was liberated by the American army.

Michael Bernheim

My father's Jewish ancestors were dispossessed, expelled, and murdered. I want to keep their memories alive and help prevent such injustice from being committed again in Germany.

We visited the Jewish cemetery in the formerly independent village of Hürben (now part of Krumbach) near Augsburg, ably guided by Willi Fischer and Herbert Auer. Neither is Jewish nor a trained historian. Rather, these Krumbach residents are purveyors of a memory culture who have dug deeply into the local archives and sought to make it visible and relevant in a modern era. The next day we explored Augsburg's Jewish cemetery on Haunstetterstraße with fellow descendant Michael Bernheim and Alfred Hausmann, both of whom are members of the local remembrance workshop, as our guides. Landauers are buried in both places. The cemeteries offer clues about days gone by, as well as insight into the present day. The lives of the people buried there have become a touchstone for a number of Germans, be they Jewish or not.

Michael told us about his lifelong struggle with his German identity, typifying the many years when much of his country felt shame, even at the times when it didn't fully take responsibility. Michael's family history is complicated, his paternal grandfather having converted from Judaism to Christianity, as did his father. None of that kept his family from being persecuted; his paternal grandmother and his grandfather's cousin were both murdered during the Holocaust.

In the Augsburg cemetery, we saw the graves of four couples who committed suicide just before they were going to be deported to Auschwitz. We heard stories about others laid to rest there, including World War I



(L-R) Elisabeth Schulte-Huxel, Jeffrey Katz, Mollie Katz, Michael Bernheim, and Alfred Hausmann at the Jewish cemetery on Haunstetterstraße, October 2022

veterans, quite a few children, and more recent Augsburg residents who emigrated from Eastern Europe. We paid homage to the gravesite of Mietek Pemper, who helped Oskar Schindler compile the list that saved some 1,000 Jewish workers and 200 other inmates at the Krakow-Plaszow concentration camp in Poland.

As we prepared to leave and the rest of the group chatted near the exit, I turned once more to face the cemetery. I let my camera dangle at my side, stuffed my notebook in my pocket, and purposely stood alone for several minutes, facing the tombstones. It was almost as though I was asking them to address me. I bowed my head and tried to soak in the history and lives represented there, freely letting in whatever thoughts came to me. Nowhere but Germany had I felt such an urgent need to spend a few quiet moments alone in a

cemetery, reflecting on what I had just heard and seen. But I felt drawn to it there, in the country where my ancestors had long lived and where many were killed.

Every person buried there had faced great challenges as Jews, no matter the era. They overcame obstacles to create and sustain a vibrant Jewish community filled with German patriots who valued their country as well as their faith. Many of their offspring met an untimely, frightening end as Jews were targeted, threatened, and killed. The lucky ones who were alive as the Nazi era began left when they could. Some version of "we made it" crossed my mind, as it had when I stood in front of my great-grandmother's grave in Raesfeld 11 years earlier. The "we" represented not just my immediate family but something much broader. Some of us are still here despite unending waves of antisemitism, a genocide of historic proportions, and prejudice that still exists today.

There was so much more to our stay in Augsburg, particularly learning about and touring the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia with director Carmen Reichert and educator Frank Schillinger. As extraordinary as the museum and synagogue are, it was a fact about the synagogue at Kriegshaber that we toured with curator Ayleen Winkler that most astounded me.

Something remarkable kept happening for a few years after the interior of the venerable synagogue on Halderstraße was destroyed during Kristallnacht, and the hatred and persecution of Jews intensified. And that is, congregants kept worshiping at Kriegshaber and holding Bar Mitzvahs there until the end of 1941.

It's hard to imagine the courage of those who continued to gather under such frightening conditions. Publicly expressing their faith put their lives at risk. They could have contented themselves by praying in their homes and in their hearts. But they would not be cowed, even when that courted danger.

No, my heart didn't laugh when I visited Augsburg. But I felt at peace paying homage to those who had come before me.

Augsburg: Reconnecting my Family's Heritage

By Diane Fischer Castiglione of Gaithersburg, Maryland. Diane is the daughter of Liese Fischer, a member of the Einstein family of Kriegshaber.

In April 2023, I made my fifth trip to Augsburg (sixth, if you count a quick drive through in 1983). Each trip has been immensely meaningful in different ways.

My first trip was in 1985 when my brother and I accompanied my mother, Liese Fischer (née Einstein), to attend the rededication of the synagogue. My mother had vowed that she would never return to Germany but several first cousins living in Scotland, South Africa, and Israel prevailed upon her to join them in a reunion. Her discomfort with being in Germany was mitigated by the joy of reuniting with family, some of whom she had not seen since they left Germany in the 1930s. While I also relished the opportunity to gather and meet with family, the most memorable part of the trip was the ability to walk with my mother around the town where she grew up. I could see her wistfulness as she recalled the happy times spent in Kriegshaber/Augsburg and pointed out

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places where she had once studied or played. It was a priceless experience which I didn't think would ever be replicated.

Yet, in 2001, I returned to Augsburg for the dedication of the Holocaust Memorial. This time, we traveled as three generations: my parents, my brother, and my then nine-year old son. We again met up with Einstein relatives from various countries and, while we visited many of the same places as we did in 1985, this time I saw things from the vantage point of a mother. I was thrilled that my son had what felt like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn about her family's history directly from her in the place where it happened. My mother was also grateful that she could share this with my father, who was not from Augsburg.

Unbelievably, it turned out not to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. In 2012, my son and I accompanied my mother back to Augsburg for her participation in the Lebenslinien program. Naturally, we were joined by cousins from Scotland and Israel. It was remarkable to watch my mother discuss her family's story in a public program as well as three programs for high school students. An outcome of the public program was that my mother met non-Jewish people who had known her family and who shared stories about how her family had helped theirs, stories she had never before heard. She was recorded as she walked by her former home with Benigna Schönhagen, then director of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS), pointing out exactly where her family had lived and lamenting that the garden no longer existed. For the first time, we could enter the



November 2012 - With family in the synagogue courtyard with the poster advertising Liese Fischer's Lebenslinien program. (L-R): Steven Anson, Diane Castiglione, Hadas Gersh, Liese Fischer, Chava Shepes, Michael Castiglione, Hilary Anson

former synagogue in Kriegshaber where her family had worshipped and which was in the early stages of restoration. Blueprints in hand, city officials involved in the project listened as my mother described the interior, pointing out where her family had sat. We were truly witnesses to history being resurrected.

In 2017, my son and I joined 21 other members of the Einstein family at the Descendants' Reunion. My mother was unable to travel but reveled in the fact that so many Einsteins had gathered together, many meeting for the first time. As many in our group had never before visited Augsburg, we saw sites important to the family with fresh eyes. We also dedicated three Erinnerungsbänder in ceremonies that touched us all deeply. Another difference about this trip was that I finally had the chance to explore Augsburg and its rich history, giving me a new appreciation for the city itself. Notably,

on this trip, we started to meet other descendants, giving us a fuller picture of the community in which our family had lived.

Which brings me to my most recent trip. Sadly, as my mother passed away in 2019, this was the first trip that I couldn't in some way share with her. It was prompted by the re-naming of a street in Kriegshaber in honor of the Einstein family, the dedication of which we could not attend due to the pandemic. Accompanied as always by my son and our cousins, I not only saw the street and revisited Kriegshaber but also explored nearby towns which had connections to Einstein family history.

What made this trip feel different to me, however, was a sense of belonging. We no longer felt like strangers. In fact, we spent quite a bit of time visiting with people who we have gotten to know over the years, whether in person or virtually: fellow descendants like Michael Bernheim and Miriam Friedmann, current and former JMAS staff like Benigna Schönhagen and Monika Müller, participants in Augsburg's remembrance community like Angela Bachmaier, and people whose families were friends and neighbors of the Einsteins like Michael Feller and Doris Zelt.

In reflecting on these trips, I realize that the recurring theme is family. It's ironic that the city which my family was forced to leave is now the place that brings us together. Back in 1985, I could never have anticipated how everything would evolve but I know my life is all the richer for my Augsburg experiences and for my continued connection with the city so key to my family story.

Visiting Augsburg

By Jeffrey Englander of Long Island, New York. Jeffrey is the great grandson of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld, grandson of Paul and Hedwig Englaender, and son of John Englander.

For my father, John Englander, his days as a resident of Augsburg, living with his family in their comfortable surroundings, before his emigration to the United States - thrust out at the tender age of 18 without his parents or the comforts and civility to which he had become accustomed - were among his most carefree, happy periods of his life. And, as with most others of his generation and background, he and his family considered themselves Germans first and foremost, and Jews only as an adjunct circumstance albeit one steeped in culture, education and *sechel* (jüdische Kopf).*

Regardless of the truly difficult and tragic circumstances surrounding his leaving Germany, however, Dad had always been happy to return to visit



April 2023 - Steven Anson, Diane's cousin, presents a certificate of appreciation to Monika Müller at the former synagogue in Kriegshaber. (L-R) Steven, Monika Müller, Diane and Michael Castiglione

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his birthplace and the site of his formative years. He did so as a Ritchie Boy in the U.S. Armed Forces while on leave and returned many times thereafter to reinforce childhood memories, to see what had changed, to visit those who remained or returned to Augsburg, and to show off his birthplace and its surroundings to family.

Our one and only opportunity to join him on such a roots trip occurred in June of 1993. That we did not return with him at any point in the 14 years until his death will weigh heavily on me for the rest of my life.

Our 1993 trip was a foursome - Dad, Mom (Eva), myself, and our then 9 year old son, Jake, who was wide-eyed during the entire trip. Whether that was a result of visiting such grand sights as the Goldener Saal, the Schaezlerpalais, the Jewish Tennis Club, or the site of the former Tuchausstellung Wimpfheimer & Cie (the building in which the family business and residence were located), or because of the desserts piled high with whipped cream, is unknowable. Dad was a faithful tour guide and we busily snapped photos and took videos which are now central to family lore. He was enormously happy to be able to show it all to us. We were welcomed with open arms wherever we went - this due to Dad's meticulous planning. We also spent time with former Augsburgers, Ann Valentine; our cousin and Nurnberg resident, Ruth Ceslanski; and, of course, most importantly for Dad, with Gernot Römer, with whom Dad had a constant and meaningful correspondence exchange.

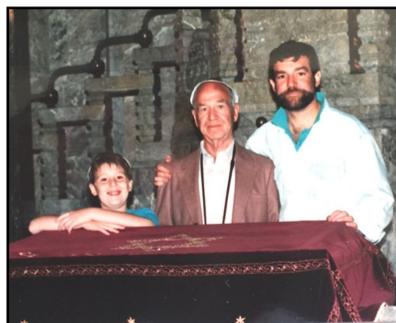
In Jake's own words (now the father of Hannah and Sophia and a practicing lawyer in New York City):

"As a 9-year-old, the idea of traveling to my grandfather's hometown was equal parts exciting and unfathomable - it was so far away (a transatlantic flight) and so foreign, though not to my grandfather of course. What would even be there when we arrived? The answer: his whole childhood, starting with the bimah where he became a bar mitzvah. It was from that synagogue altar that we took an iconic family photo of all three generations of Augsburg descendants, which perfectly captured our voyage: me, with a silly 9-year-old grin; Grandpa, with the bittersweet memory of what he left behind visible in his gaze; and my dad, a Queens, New York boy with German refugee parents, bridging both worlds.

While there was so much else to remember from that trip - the magnificent golden ceiling, the cold in summer Zugspitze, the countryside cows near Füssen, and, of course, "schlag" (whipped cream) at every stop - it is that bimah that will always be Augsburg to me."



(Above, L-R) Jeffrey, Eva, Jake, and John Englander outside the synagogue. (Below, L-R) Jake, John, and Jeffrey at the bimah



Images and sounds that are indelibly engraved in our consciousness. We have promised our offspring and six grandchildren that we will return as a group to show the next generation what is important for them to see, learn, and internalize. Hoping that it can be soon.

**Sechel* is both a Hebrew and a Yiddish word, the Hebrew meanings having been absorbed into Yiddish. Pronounced *sekhel* in Modern/Israeli Hebrew and *seykhel* in Yiddish, it can mean intelligence, smarts, brains, reason, common sense, cleverness or even wisdom. *Sechel* is defined in the authoritative Eben Shoshan Hebrew Dictionary as "the spiritual ability to think, to weigh, the strength to judge and to come to a resolution." (Source: <https://momentmag.com/jewish-word-sechel/>)

A Remembrance Post in Memory of Louis and Paula Bernheimer

By Brigitte Bernheimer, who lives in Paris, France. Brigitte is the daughter of Fritz and Ellen Bernheimer and granddaughter of Louis and Paula Bernheimer, all from Augsburg.

Note: This article is an edited version of Brigitte's speech at the ceremony unveiling the Remembrance Post (Erinnerungsband). The original version can be found on the website of the Gedenkbuch Augsburg: (<https://gedenkbuch-augsburg.de/en/biografien/louis-bernheimer>).



(L-R) Louis and Paula Bernheimer

"I am the daughter of Fritz Bernheimer, the eldest son of Louis and Paula Bernheimer in whose honor a Remembrance Post (Erinnerungsband) was erected in Augsburg on November 8, 2022. I am sure my father would have been touched to see his parents, especially his father, honored.

I was born at the end of 1940. Throughout the war, my parents, my brother Marc, and I lived in hiding under the name Bertin in a small village in central France. We had no news from our grandparents and, all my childhood, we waited for their return.

It was only until after the war that we learned that they had been arrested in Bayonne, France in 1942. Apparently, they wanted to go, via Spain, to Cincinnati, Ohio (U.S.A.), where their youngest son, my uncle Walter, was living. From Bayonne, they had been sent to Drancy and, from there, deported to Auschwitz by convoy n°26 on August 31, 1942.

As my father died early, at just 50 years old, when I was still quite young, it was only my mother who could share limited details about my paternal grandparents. What I knew was that my grandfather had hesitated for a long time about emigrating and had only done so in 1939, when the possibilities of leaving had become very restricted.

I also learned that, born in the small neighboring town of Ichenhausen, he had moved with his wife and children to Augsburg where he had founded Louis Bernheimer Engineering, an underground construction and plumbing company, which grew very successful over the years. Even today you can find urban materials from his factory used in the streets of the city. Louis Bernheimer, had a very good reputation. I found

Theme articles continue on Page 8

evidence of this in an article from 1908 which spoke of the “renowned design office” of Louis Bernheimer-Augsburg.

My parents had shown me a brochure, which I still have, representing my grandfather and his brother Alfred, who was his partner, as well as a photo of their house and a view of the engine room.

In 2001, the city of Augsburg erected a memorial wall of names dedicated to the memory of its murdered Jewish inhabitants. My grandparents were among those remembered. So, I came to Augsburg to attend the ceremony at the town hall, a ceremony initiated by Gernot Römer whose memory I salute.

This is how I discovered my father's hometown. And, immediately, I felt a link between this city and me. I wanted to see the place where my grandparents lived, at 9 Friedberger Strasse, but at the time, there was a gas station. Today, there is nothing left, I believe, just a wasteland.

However, it was only recently that I decided to begin learning about my grandparents' history. While hoping to find clues about their lives in Augsburg newspapers, I had the immense joy of discovering on the front page of the "Augsburger Allgemeine" the photo of five high school girls from the Maria Ward High School holding up a sign: They had just won the Rolf Joseph Prize the subject of which was: in search of traces of a Jewish family. These five students, Ornella Vargui, Hannah Lehmann, Léonie Weise, Rebekka Graf, and Maya Muller, under the guidance of their history teacher, Joanna Linse, had chosen to research the history of the Bernheimer family.



(Above) Brigitte Bernheimer with the students from Maria Ward High School (Below) Brigitte Bernheimer at the Remembrance Band unveiling in 2022



They have done a remarkable job and I am very grateful to them. They too were happy to discover a descendant of Louis Bernheimer, whose story they knew so well. They have shown through their work that the younger generations are interested in their past and draw conclusions of tolerance and openness to others. I would also like to thank Mr. Felix Bellaire, from the city of Augsburg, who initiated the installation of this Remembrance Post.

Furthermore, I appreciated the availability of those in charge of the Augsburg city archives who quickly answered my questions and sent me many documents concerning my grandfather.

I didn't come to Augsburg alone. My daughter and two of her children insisted on accompanying me and, thus, discovered the city of their ancestors. It is a great consolation for all my family to see that the city of Augsburg wants to honor my grandfather who loved his city and his country so much.

These several days I spent in Augsburg left me with an emotional memory and made me want to return to Augsburg.

Maybe one day?"

A Retrospective Reconciliation

By Jason Teutsch who currently lives in the United States. Since his visit to Augsburg, he has reconnected with his German roots while living in Berlin and Heidelberg.

The city of Augsburg invited my Augsburg-born grandparents, Eric and Hilda Teutsch, back to the city in October 2000 along with a small group of other former residents. I was living in Budapest at the time and received an irresistible offer to join their excursion. I had never been to Germany, my grandparents hadn't set foot back in their native country since World War II began, and the three of us had never traveled together. Layers of adventures lay ahead.

The city rolled out the red carpet for us. We stayed in beautiful hotels, dined in fine restaurants, and saw a stage performance of Nathan der Weise; the mayor himself gifted me a watch whose face called out, "Stadt Augsburg" in red and green. My grandfather never translated anything for me on our sightseeing tours. Instead, whenever something interesting happened, he just turned to me and opined, "It's a shame you don't speak German." Our tour included former Augsburg residents from France and the only "common" language was German.

By the time the Nazis released my grandfather from Dachau in December 1938, Swiss borders had closed. At 18 years old, he detoured to a Kitchener camp in Kent, England. Even though Augsburg had changed since his childhood, my grandfather remembered his hometown perfectly. Before Augsburg, his family came from Venningen, and his parents perished in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. "Here was your great grandfather's building which housed

Hirschmann's kosher butcher shop!" he said, confidently gesturing towards a store window on Katharinengasse. What an incredible way to learn history: I witnessed my grandparents making peace with their native land.

Had history run a different course, Augsburg could have been my father's hometown, too. In that parallel universe, however, I probably wouldn't exist to share this story.

Editor's Note:

Thanks to Alfred Hausmann for his diligent research which enabled the author to reconstruct his family's connection to the Augsburg butcher shop. A previous generation of Teusches may have operated a kosher butcher shop in Venningen.



Arthur and Klara Teutsch, 1907



Eric Teutsch at 16 (in lederhosen) with parents Klara and Arthur Teutsch, 1935

your great grandfather's building which housed

Make Good Friends and Move On

By Rick Landman, son of Henry Landman, who lives in New York City.

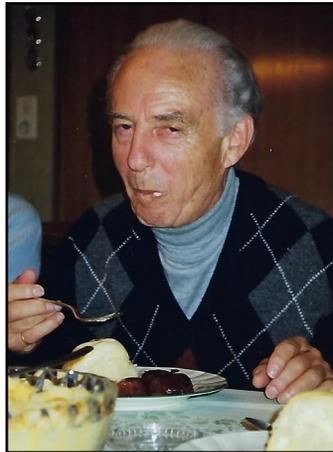
My family's story is a bit different than most, because my father, Henry Landman, never really left Augsburg. At the end of the war, he was stationed near Augsburg and assisted in the de-Nazification of the city. The Allies appointed Robert Bachner (a Christian) as the head of the Jewish community, based on my dad's recommendation. Robert was married to a "Mischling," Gerta, and my father stayed in touch with them, and others, until their deaths. My dad taught me not to forget the evils of the past, but to make good friends and move on.

In the 1980s my mother, father, and I went back to Germany together to visit all of the cities that my mother's and father's families lived in. My father was also friends with Gernot Römer and worked on many projects with him. I was Henry's secretary and emailer, so I am quite familiar with the hours that they spent together on the restoration of the synagogue, the various Kristallnacht programs, the creation of the Holocaust Memorial, and the two reunions in New York. We went to all of these events. I was also the "Gepaecktraeger" on these visits, including the time the City of Augsburg invited back all the former Jewish Augsburgers.

These trips made me see that today's Germans are nothing like the Germans of the Nazi era. I prefer being with them than many of my fellow "unwoke" Americans these days. I even became a dual American-German citizen back in 2007 after I donated a torah to Congregation Beth Shalom in Munich, where Henry's father grew up. I have been spending years trying to find the proper places for so much of the Judaica that both sides of my family brought to America in 1939. It is not an easy task. Most institutions have no capacity to accept new donations.

In a 1980s visit, there was some trepidation on behalf of my father when he met older Germans, especially in the rural towns of his relatives. I remember how we couldn't find Hellstein and his grandparent's house. He would not speak to older people, and the younger ones never heard of Hellstein (it is now Birstein). We found it when Henry recognized the soccer field that he played on.

These days I take care of my 96 year old mother (born in Nurnberg) and do not travel out of New York City. But I do see the time when I can travel back to Augsburg once again to visit all the cities and towns where my ancestors lived. I also hope to eventually find good homes for as much of the Judaica and historical pieces that I can send to Germany.



Henry Landman in Augsburg eating a Dampfnudel prepared by Gerta Bachner in 1998.

Impressions of Augsburg, Discovering Family Stories

By Julia Rymer Brucker of Littleton, Colorado. Julia is a descendant of Richard Michael Rymer né Untermayer.

Since my trip to Augsburg in the summer of 2022, it has been difficult to put into words all that I felt after my experiences there. I learned a tremendous amount about my family's history and their lives and the lives of their fellow Jewish friends and neighbors in Augsburg, and saw for myself the painful history of how it was all destroyed by the National Socialists.

Our journey began with meeting Michael Bernheim, a fellow descendant who is an Augsburg native, and his wife, Suzanne. We discussed many topics and it was wonderful to connect with another descendant of this once proud community.

Our next visit was to the Jewish cemetery in Augsburg, where Jews from centuries past are buried. I discovered a number of relatives there, including an ancestor also named Michael Untermayer, my father's namesake. I learned that my great-great-grandmother, Hedwig Epstein, died in Theresienstadt.

Exploring Augsburg as a vibrant town was a highlight of the trip. We visited the Fuggerei and the Textilindustriemuseum and explored the winding streets of the ancient Roman town that it once was. My cousin, Tom Cramer, also arranged a meeting for us with community members and leaders, including the mayor of Augsburg, at the Rathaus, where we saw the memorial that Augsburg itself has created for its own victims of the Shoah.

It was the visit to the synagogue and museum that was the most powerful for me. To step inside a building that my family and their many friends had built and to learn the extensive history of Jewish life in Augsburg since the Middle Ages was deeply moving. I experienced a sense of lineage, as well as profound loss. The world that they built, their dedication to Jewish life and practice, was almost entirely destroyed – all that is left is the synagogue and almost no survivors returned, nor did many descendants resettle in the city. We were, and are, scattered across the world, including my own family.

I commend Augsburgers for acknowledging the history of, and their part in, the Shoah; for revealing the whole truth of its brutality and cruelty towards what were their fellow citizens. It is Augsburg's way to honor them and to live the proclamation we all say about the Shoah, "Never again."



(L-R) Julia's father Mike Untermayer, Julia Rymer Brucker, cousin Tom Cramer, and Michael Bernheim in front of the remembrance band of Michael Bernheim's great-grandmother



At a meeting with the Oberbürgermeister in Augsburg. The young girl at left is Julia's daughter, Mariana Brucker.

Additionally, I had often wondered why my grandfather, Richard Untermayer, had not returned to Augsburg after the war and why he continued Jewish practice and did not assimilate as most other Jews did after the war. It was in Augsburg that I understood his reasons. With nothing to return to, he worked to build a beautiful, full, free life in the United States by first fighting in the 10th Mountain Division in World War II and later marrying my grandmother and settling in Pueblo, Colorado with his extended family. And, as he was proudly Jewish, after his escape he remained Jewish, but decided never to return to Germany or speak German again.

Ultimately, this trip was an occasion to honor my ancestors and to realize that, in my continuing of their traditions, I carry their memories with me and into the future.

Coming home? – Meeting Fellow Descendants in Augsburg

By Michael Bernheim

Introductory Note: You may have noticed a recurring thread in reading many of the articles above. The great connector in many descendants' visits to Augsburg is himself a descendant of the Jewish community of Augsburg, Michael Bernheim. Michael, who lives in Augsburg, has dedicated much of his time to the Remembrance Workshop and our group. Our collective visits have given him a unique perspective on family travels to Augsburg.

In October 2019, my cousin Judy Regensteiner and her husband Ken came to Bavaria. I joined them for a few leisurely days in Garmisch, including an unforgettable trip up the Zugspitze. Then I drove them to Augsburg for their first visit to their ancestors' hometown. We had a guided visit to the synagogue and we went to the Jewish cemetery on Haunstetter Strasse, where we said Kaddish for our mutual ancestors. At both places, I was overwhelmed with the feeling that we belong together. And somehow, I could sense, they felt the same. The question haunted me: Where would we be without what had happened in Germany between 1933 and 1945?

Of course, Judy and Ken were family and we had met before on both sides of the ocean. But in 2022, with the pandemic almost over, I had the opportunity to meet a number of other fellow descendants: Lawrence Kahn and his wife; then Julia Rymer Brucker, her father Michael Untermayer, and her cousin Tom Cramer; later Jeffrey and Mollie Katz – all of whom came from the United States – and, finally, in November, Mme. Brigitte Bernheimer from Paris. Every encounter was a first time. But in each case, we seemed to sense that we have belonged together for ages, and that, since we had not seen each other for a long time, there was a lot to talk about. It felt like kinship. The common fate welded us together. Resentment may have been part of their feelings when coming to Augsburg. But, clearly, the bond to their ancestors' hometown became stronger.

This year, so far, there are four visits of descendants in my calendar, both family and others. I look forward to every one of them. ❀



We are hearing that descendants of the Jewish community of Augsburg are meeting up with other descendants and we could not be happier about this! If you meet up with one of us, please take a photo and let us know about it! Please send your information to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com. Thank you!

Augsburg Visiting California

By Eva Bernheim-Geisperger of Straubing, Bavaria. Eva is a descendant of the Bernheim family and is Michael Bernheim's sister.

In late January 2023, representatives of three generations - all descendants of Augsburg Jewish families - met in Palm Springs, California to celebrate Joan Nathan's 80th birthday. Eva Bernheim, her brother Christoph, and his daughter Ruth flew from Munich to California just for a long weekend. Their aunt and great aunt, Joan Nathan, is a journalist and author of numerous books about Jewish cuisine worldwide. Occasionally, her research journeys have brought her back to her family's Swabian roots, most recently in the past year. Joan's grandfather Rudolf and the Bernheims' great grandmother Maria were siblings. The Bar Mitzvah of Rudolf's son Ernst, Joan's father, born in Augsburg in 1905, was celebrated in the brand-new Augsburg Synagogue. In the late 1920s, Ernst emigrated to Providence, Rhode Island. The contact between the families was revived in the 1980s and, since then, has been maintained over generations and continents through mutual visits on both sides of the Atlantic. ❀



(L-R) Joan, Ruth, and Eva hiking in the Indian Canyon near Palm Springs, January 2023. Photo by Christoph Bernheim



The Family Spotlight is a regularly featured column in our newsletter. This is a place where readers can get to know a bit about your family, its history, or read about a specific story that focuses on an event, a family heirloom, your family's contributions to Augsburg, or another related matter. We hope you will consider sharing something about your family for our next issue.

The first article in this issue draws upon our theme.

A Visit to Augsburg + a Mercedes = ?

By Bettina Kaplan of Oakland, California. Bettina is the granddaughter of Ellen Feldberg née Arnold and grandniece of Hans (John) Arnold of Augsburg.

You just never know what awaits you when you explore your family history! I certainly never imagined that a Mercedes-Benz would initiate my first visit to Augsburg and another Mercedes would be the link to learning so much about our family.

In 1974, my family picked up in Stuttgart a spanking new Mercedes-Benz for a friend in California to drive on our European holiday. It was the first (and last) time my mother was in Germany since she left Stettin, Germany with her family in 1938. This visit to Augsburg was a stop on the way to the "Romantic Road." We visited the cemetery to pay homage to our Arnold and Landauer relatives: my mother's grandparents Grete and Arthur Arnold who were victims of the Holocaust and her great grandparents Bettina and Heinrich Landauer. Many more of our relatives were buried there but we did not have much information about the family history. We took a few photos, made a donation, and off we went.

Fast forward to 2013, when I coordinated a three-day visit, armed with an organized folder of research thanks to the internet and photos found in my aunt Ursula's (my mother's twin) treasure trove of old family albums. We were guided by two volunteers who knew about the Arnold and Landauer families because of research they had done for an exhibit about buildings during the Nazi period at the local architecture museum in Augsburg. We visited all the points of interest related to the Arnold and Landauer families, including the State Textile and Industry Museum because the Arnold and Landauer families were in the textile business. After wonderful tours each day, I stayed up late to write to my family about the discoveries of the day. After sharing my family photos with one of our guides, I was tickled to learn that the hotel we were staying in, then known as "Die Drei Mohren," was the place where my grandparents got married 81 years earlier. When I showed the photo to a front desk employee of the hotel, they asked for a copy of it to be used in a book they were commissioning about the history of the "Die Drei Mohren." My trip was a success and I felt fulfilled to be able to fill in gaps about my family!

But it got better! About two months later, I received an email from Gottfried Koch who had visited the Textile Museum in Augsburg in search of information about the Arnold family. He had recently bought a 1934 Mercedes-Benz Cabriolet which was originally owned by Hans (John) Arnold, my mother's uncle. The director of the museum gave him my email address as he had just

recently met me. Gottfried was intent on learning everything he could about the history of this dilapidated old car that his son Raphael would restore to its original glory over the next four years. Gottfried and I exchanged emails very regularly during this timeframe as he methodically researched the story of the Arnold family. This resulted in my delving deeper into our family documents as he explored archives and databases available at the time. I believe Gottfried also was extremely interested in learning more about the history of a Jewish family through the connection of the Mercedes as it was a first-hand opportunity to learn more about a German Jewish family and its fate. He eventually published a book (in German) about the Arnold Mercedes which one can find on Amazon.

We learned that my great uncle, Hans, and his fiancée, Hilda, escaped Germany to England in his Mercedes convertible in 1937! The car was sold before leaving for the United States in 1938.



Hans Arnold (Right) in a Mercedes, circa 1936

Through his research, Gottfried found a former owner in England, Tony Bates, who had bought the car in 1961. We had the pleasure of meeting Tony with the entire Koch family in 2017 in Augsburg when the car made its debut as part of the Kahn & Arnold exhibit at the State Textile and Industry Museum in Augsburg during the week of the 2017 descendants' reunion.

When I was ready, willing, and able to take a deeper look at our family history, I found how "stuff" does matter - - whether it's a car, a photo, or a new personal contact. They gave me more insight and meaning to not only my family and their values, but our shared global history! It awakened a new passion for me and introduced me to new friends with similar interests.



(L-R) Gottfried Koch, Bettina Kaplan, Erich Strohmaier, and Tony Bates with the restored Mercedes Benz at TIM, Augsburg 2017

When you go to Augsburg, I feel there is no telling what you will discover about your ancestors and even about you!!

I especially thank Dr. Gottfried Koch for all his persistent and tireless research in learning about the Arnold family. I also appreciated the sensitivity and compassion he demonstrated during the process of uncovering and sharing the horrors of the NS period.

Family Spotlight continues on Page 12

Family Ties

By George Sturm of Englewood, New Jersey. George is the son of Anna and Max Sturm, grandson of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld, and a descendant of the Heilbronner/Steinfeld families of Augsburg.

In his fascinating book, **We Were Europeans** (2010, Gefen Publishing House), Werner Löbl/Loval clearly delineates his family's Augsburg roots. His grandfather, Hermann Aufhäuser (1847-1931) was born in the village of Hainsfarth but moved to the then "Big Apple" of Augsburg as soon as he reached adulthood, there to take over the thriving liqueur and wholesale cigar business established by his uncle Alfred Rosenfelder.

To get an idea of just how thriving was that firm, one need only look at the photo (p. 106 of Werner's remarkable book) picturing the fine house at Hermannstrasse 23 with adjoining entrance to the business. It was there that the four Aufhäuser children - David, Siegfried, Friedl, and Albert - were born.

Friedl Aufhäuser enjoyed the typically comfortable childhood of an upper middle class Jewish maiden. Her father Hermann was one of the major contributors, along with my grandfather, Hugo Steinfeld, and other prominent Augsburg Jews, to the design and building in 1917 of the great synagogue in the Halderstrasse. I believe she was one of my mother's schoolmates and they maintained a friendship until Friedl met and married Sali (Salomon) Löbl from an eminent Bamberg family and moved to that city where her two children, Erika and Werner, were born and raised.

From teenaged Erika's journal, we find that the Löbl family went to visit the rest of the Aufhäuser family in Augsburg twice as late as 1939. At New Years, she writes: "We are facing the unknown, looking at our lives as a game of dice, wondering whether a lucky number will come up. (By 'number,' she undoubtedly refers to the requisite emigration number.) If it doesn't, we will have to start all over again." And at the Seder with the Aufhäusers just before her last visit to Augsburg, she muses: "The Seder dish was on the table with all those memorable symbols, with wine and matzoh further contributing to the festive atmosphere. Slowly and pensively, I followed the Haggadah translation - the story of the Exodus from Egypt - don't those ancient times have much in common with the present? Does history still repeat itself, in our time? Will God help us, too, and sustain us as He did our forefathers?"

And then the number did come - but not to emigrate to America, as they had hoped - but via England in the Kindertransport, to Cuba, and finally to Ecuador, the only country still willing to accept a number of the fleeing Jews of Germany. (It was in England that Erika became Erica, the first of a number of name changes from Löbl to Loebl to Werner Loval.) The children were to take one circuitous route, their parents an even more circuitous route, but finally, after what had seemed like endlessly solitary travels, parents and children were reunited in Quito in 1942. It was there that Sali Löbl died quite unexpectedly at the age of 53; his widow, Friedl, and their two children were at last able to leave their interim home to arrive in 1945 in the United States.

My widowed father, Max Sturm, and Friedl found each other again and soon spent most Saturday evenings playing bridge or just hanging out with mutual

friends. When my sister Ilse married, soon to be followed by my brother Walter, I was making plans to leave for graduate school and we called a family confab. We three Sturm children urged our father to marry Friedl, thus providing these two old friends companionship and obviating their aloneness. At last, my dad agreed and "popped the question," her agreement modified in that she wanted to have a gall bladder procedure over with before their wedding.

I will never forget when Erica and Werner appeared at our apartment on Riverside Drive to break the bad news: "They found that mother is riddled with cancer, but she must never know," Erica announced. And in full knowledge of the sad diagnosis, my dad went ahead with the wedding plans. They were married only a few months before Friedl Aufhäuser Loebl (the spelling had changed from Löbl) Sturm passed away.

Now here is a postscript, one of the happy coincidences in our family: During the last weeks of Friedl's life, she had a practical nurse, the Hanover-born Frieda Goldstein Neuberg, with whom my dad fell in love. They were married and spent the remainder of his days happily together.



(L-R) Frieda and Max Sturm in New York around 1959

Further Notation - An Interesting Tie to Augsburg:

Werner Loval (whose last name was further changed from the original Löbl) became a U.S. diplomat in Washington, D.C., serving as a liaison to Israel, as our family reported was his ambition. He moved from Washington to Jerusalem in 1953, and began working at the Israel Foreign Ministry. During his career he served as a diplomat in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, and Mexico. He and his wife, Pamela, were among the founding members of the Har-El Reform Synagogue in Jerusalem and played a significant role in developing the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel. He died in November 2022. A life of a descendant of the Jewish community of Augsburg who had traveled from Bamberg, Germany, via the Kindertransport to England, and then on to Ecuador, the United States, and finally, Israel - - well lived.

“Everywhere I am, I don’t quite like it.”

By Michael Bernheim, descendant of the Bernheim family.
Michael lives in Augsburg.

When Carmen Reichert, Director of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia, asked me if I wanted to be the stage guest of the 2022 Lebenslinien (Lifelines) performance on November 13, I immediately said, “yes.” Lebenslinien is a series created twenty years ago. Its intention has been to interview victims of the Nazi terror and to make their experiences, their statements, and their messages known to the public. The organizers started with eyewitnesses and, later, included descendants thereof. The format is a ninety-minute performance in the “Sensemble” Theater, a small stage located in the former textile mill district in Augsburg. It includes the actual interview, accompanied by readings of suitable texts, and music played on an electric cello.

Beforehand, Carmen and her team needed a phrase that could serve as a catchy title for the event. I remembered the statement my father frequently made, allegedly quoting his grandmother, but in fact describing his own state of mind: “*Ich bin überall ein bisschen ungerne*,” which roughly means “Everywhere I am, I don’t quite like it.”

The little theater was full. There were many familiar faces: my siblings, a former classmate and his wife, people from the Augsburg remembrance community, Jewish friends, friends from the Catholic community, retired employees of the former family business, and representatives of the City of Augsburg and of the press. And then I found myself on-stage answering Carmen’s questions about Jewish life in the Bernheim family before 1933, about how my grandfather and my father managed to survive, about the scars these experiences have left, and about the role our Jewish roots are playing now.

Normally, I am not a person who enjoys being on stage. But I knew what I was talking about, I knew I could rely on Carmen, and, somehow, I sensed that the audience was interested in the topic. So, in the end, I found it a great relief to tell everybody about my family and about myself. The positive, often surprising, response showed that even friends had not known what had happened to our family.

The title I had suggested proved a lucky choice. When my father used this phrase (“*Ich bin überall ein bisschen ungerne*.”), he obviously wanted to express, even if I did not understand him back then, that everywhere in Germany he was reminded of the hardship that befell his family and that abroad he was reminded of being German. In the course of the evening, quite organically, it became clear that this dilemma burdened at least three generations; it was the theme of the evening, linking most of the questions and answers. ☸



Carmen Reichert interviewing Michael Bernheim on stage

Photo by Ilya Kotov

Alfred Hausmann

I (76) am a former middle school teacher. I have been active in the ErinnerungsWerkstatt since 2012. My focus is to create biographies of victims; I like writing and researching in libraries and archives. I want to contribute to this chapter of Augsburg’s history and, as far as possible, prepare a dignified memory of the victims.

Claudia Huber

I am from Augsburg and have also lived in other Bavarian cities, as well as in France and in Spain. I have worked as a high school teacher for German, French, and Spanish language and literature. Since my retirement in 2017, I have been more involved in the activities of our ErinnerungsWerkstatt. My own family played different roles during the NS era, so I want us to remember what has happened and how the German people acted.

Fritz Schwarzbäcker

I am active in the ErinnerungsWerkstatt Augsburg because I want to contribute that remembering is stronger than forgetting. Violence against, and suppression of, people who are regarded as different must not determine our actions.

Michael Friedrichs

I am Dr. Michael Friedrichs, born in 1947. I was strongly influenced by a 1964 photo exhibition about Auschwitz during the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, by my engagement in the student movement during my studies in Heidelberg, and by my Jewish cousins and their families in North America.

Wolfgang Poeppel

Based on my profession as a history teacher with a focus on the first half of the 20th century and on my interest in its local footprints, I have been a member of the EWA since it was founded, attending events now and then. My active involvement with the project “The Broken Chalice” about the Aryanization of the textile company “Kahn & Arnold” motivated me further and triggered my decision to become a board member. ☸



Remembrance Band of Wolfgang Bernheim

Honoring the Memory of a Family Member from Augsburg

By Michael Bernheim, Augsburg; Bettina Kaplan, California; and Deborah Sturm Rausch, New York

Editor's Note: Some of our readers have inquired about how to get a Remembrance Band (Erinnerungsband) or Stumbling Stone (Stolpersteine) to honor their family members in Augsburg. The information below is a guide to how to proceed with this endeavor.

There are two types of installations done in Augsburg to honor the memory of someone who was persecuted by the Nazis. One is the Remembrance Band (Erinnerungsband) and the other is the Stumbling Stone (Stolpersteine). Stumbling Stones can be found throughout Europe and are placed on the street. Remembrance Bands are elevated on posts and are more popular for Jewish victims in Augsburg.

Erinnerungsbänder

Whom to contact:

Your first contact is Dr. Felix Bellaire at the Augsburg Office for Remembrance Culture. His email address is erinnerungskultur@augzburg.de.

For more information, you may also consult the office's home page at <https://www.augzburg.de/kultur/erinnerungskultur/gedenkzeichen>.



Remembrance Band of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld

Criteria

Remembrance Bands or Stumbling Stones can be installed for all persons:

- whose last voluntarily chosen place of residence was in Augsburg
- who died or were murdered in ghettos, concentration camps, detention, and extermination camps, as well as in "healing" and "nursing" facilities
- who were driven to suicide by persecution, harassment, or humiliation
- who lost their lives while trying to escape from the Nazis
- who died because of detention or forced labor

Installation of Remembrance Bands:

Dr. Felix Bellaire handles all technical issues. The costs are born by the applicants and are currently approximately € 390 (depending on energy costs)

Stolpersteine

Please contact Thomas Hacker at the Stolperstein-Initiative Augsburg at info@stolpersteine-augzburg.de. The Initiativkreis Stolpersteine for Augsburg and the surrounding areas will be the point of contact for all issues relating to ordering and installing the Stolpersteine. It is not necessary to contact the



Example of a Stolpersteine from the website: <https://www.stolpersteine-augzburg.de/Site/augzburg.html>

Stolpersteine Foundation (founded by artist Gunter Demnig) separately. The Augsburg group can also help find financial sponsors if needed.

The list of stumbling stones can be found at <http://www.stolpersteine-augzburg.de/Site/augzburg.html>.

The cost is presently € 120.

Required Information

The following information is required for both types of memorials:

1. Type of memorial: Erinnerungsband / Remembrance Post or Stolperstein / Stumbling Stone (see photos)
2. Location address
3. Text to be engraved on the memorial
4. Biographical data of the victim (especially full name, dates of birth and death, place of death, cause of death, etc.) There is an option to send a short biography to be added to the online memorial book.
5. Evidence for the victim's fate
6. Proof that the requested location of the memorial is the victim's last voluntarily chosen place of residence
7. In case of a non-relative applying, written agreement from living relatives of the person(s) to be memorialized or proof that no living relatives could be identified.

Please send all relevant information to the Office for Remembrance Culture erinnerungskultur@augzburg.de. This office can assist with potentially complicated research. They can also help with all questions regarding the application process and all technical issues related to the memorial.

Approvals

The city will approve your application after verifying submitted information. This is necessary since almost all memorials are installed on public property. ☞

Did you Know? The Augsburg Office for Remembrance Culture has published a brochure that features a Remembrance Trail with a map and descriptions of all the remembrance installations in Augsburg.



Walking Remembrance Trail map of Augsburg

This brochure is available in hard copy only, but can be obtained by writing to erinnerungskultur@augzburg.de.



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 - Did Jews in Augsburg and Swabia experience antisemitism prior to the National Socialist period?

The following was provided by Christian Porzelt, M. A., Research Assistant Education and Research, Jewish Museum of Augsburg/Swabia.

A - Anti-Semitism in Germany did not begin with the National Socialists' seizure of power in January 1933. Jewish families and individuals had already experienced anti-Semitic attacks in the German Empire (1871-1918) and during the Weimar Republic (1918-1933). The rise of the National Socialists was inextricably linked with terrorist attacks on Jews.

The Jews living in Augsburg were also subjected to anti-Semitic measures. To what extent, however, is difficult to assess today. Only comparatively few cases have been documented. Perhaps this is due to the fact that approval of National Socialism among the Augsburg population was significantly lower than in other German cities. This was caused by the strong influence of the Catholic Church and social democratic parties. Until 1933, the Nazi Party was elected in Augsburg at a below-average rate. In the Reichstag elections on March 5, 1933, when the Nazi Party received around 44 percent in the Reich, it received only 32 percent in the city.

Nevertheless, Jews were still defamed and attacked in Augsburg. For example, in 1930 the director of the municipal theater ("Intendant des Stadttheaters"), Karl Lustig-Prean (1892-1970), faced crude attacks from the press because he was married to a Jewish wife. And as early as 1931, the local Nazi Party publicly called for a boycott of Jewish businessmen. In both cases, however, the affected persons were able to successfully fight the attacks in court.

The increasing brutalization of German society in the 1920s and early 1930s was also evident in the widespread desecration of Jewish cemeteries. At the cemetery of the Jewish community of Augsburg on Haunstetter Strasse, there was destruction of gravestones in 1924 and 1930. In both cases the perpetrators could not be identified. Also in 1924, there was an attack on the Jewish cemetery in Binswangen, 35 km northwest of Augsburg. In this case, the culprits, known students of the Augsburg Upper Secondary School ("Oberrealschule"), knocked over the gravestones or scratched swastikas on them.

The unprecedented act of violence against Wilhelm Rosenbaum in Memmingen on August 6, 1921, received national press coverage. The cheese wholesaler was chased through the city by an incited crowd and severely maltreated. Some days later the chairman of the Jewish community expressed the shock that the events had caused among the Jews in Memmingen in an open letter to the city council. They also urged the body to take a stand against rampant anti-Semitism in the city. When

"incitement is carried on for years without the authority of the board intervening, then such outbursts of a misguided crowd take place," they bitterly concluded.

Bibliography

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In honor of our fifth anniversary, we thought it would be interesting to look back at all the recipes we have published. Here is a list of those recipes, all of which can be found in the appropriate issue posted at <https://jmaugsburg.de/en/involvement/network/descendants/>. Hope you are inspired to give some of them a try – and to keep sending recipes to share! (Anyone have a good Sauerbraten recipe??)

Recipes are listed in alphabetical order with the issue and date of publication.

- Authentic German Lebkuchen – December 2021
- Binswanger Steamed Chocolate Pudding – December 2022
- Chicken Fricassee – June 2021
- Dampfnudel (Dumplings) – December 2018
- Gefüllte Kalbsbrust (Stuffed Veal Breast) – December 2019
- Granny Sophie Einstein's Lebkuchen – December 2018
- Käsespätzle – December 2019
- Kirschkuchen Eingesunken (Cherry Coffee Cake) – June 2019
- Königsberger Klöße – December 2020
- Marble Cake – June 2021
- Rote Grütze – December 2021
- Semmelknödel (Bavarian Bread Dumplings) – June 2020
- Spitzbuben (cookies, also known as Linzer Auge) – June 2022
- Tzetchkendaatsche (Plum Torte) – June 2019



If you have a News Brief to share for the next issue, we encourage you to send it to us. A News Brief is a condensed version of a story with the specific purpose of sharing newsworthy information in a quick and efficient manner. **Please email your News Brief to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com. Thank you!**

Remembrance Culture Leaders Recognized in Augsburg

Benigna Schönhagen (former Director of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia), Angela Bachmair, and Nikolaus Hueck were recognized for the years of 2021/2022 as leaders of the Remembrance Workshop (EWA).

According to Mayor, Eva Weber, the Remembrance Workshop has provided outstanding services to the culture of awareness and remembrance in Augsburg. Thomas Hacker was also awarded a medal for his work at the Stolpersteine initiative group.

Every year since 1993, the city of Augsburg has awarded the "For Augsburg" medal of merit to thank citizens who have rendered services to the city in a selfless manner and primarily on a voluntary basis, in particular "to the well-being of the local community of Augsburg's municipal system." One of our fellow descendants, Miriam Friedmann was an awardee in 2020.



(L-R) Augsburg Mayor Eva Weber, Benigna Schönhagen, Angela Bachmair, and Nikolaus Hueck

International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2023 in Augsburg

This past January, the city of Augsburg held its annual ceremony in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. To reach a larger audience, the initial portion of the ceremony took place outside, in Augsburg's main square in front of the city hall. Mayor Eva Weber spoke and large placards of some of the local victims, including Paul and Hedwig Englaender (see photo) were held by Augsburgers.

The DJCA was honored to once again have been asked to participate. Excerpts from letters of family members of Diane Castiglione, DJCA Co-Founder and Deborah Sturm Rausch, DJCA **Connections** Editor, who had suffered during the Holocaust were read by Dr. Carmen Reichert, Director of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia, and Mr. Wolfgang Poeppel, a member of the ErinnerungsWerkstatt Augsburg.

(Right) Augsburgers who participated in International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2023 carry signs bearing the names and photos of some of Augsburg's victims, including Paul and Hedwig Englaender.



New Rabbi in Augsburg

Rabbi Asher Goldschmidt is the new permanent rabbi for the Jewish community in Augsburg. The position had been vacant since the late Rabbi Henry Brandt left the position in 2019. Rabbi Goldschmidt, 28, came to Augsburg with his family from Israel. In addition to Hebrew and Yiddish, he speaks Russian, an important ability because 90 percent of the approximately 1,400 community members come from the former Soviet Union.

State of Bavaria grant for Synagogue Restoration

On Tuesday, March 14, 2023, the Bavarian Minister of Art, Markus Blume, visited the Augsburg synagogue to announce a grant from the Free State of Bavaria to cover part of the costs of the upcoming renovation of the synagogue. Markus Blume symbolically presented the Jewish Community in Swabia Augsburg (IKG) with a check for almost 4.7 million Euros.

During his visit, Markus Blume emphasized the outstanding religious and historical importance of the synagogue. Afterwards he visited the permanent exhibition of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia.

The project, which is planned to last several years, includes renovation of both the synagogue and the community building at Halderstraße 6-8, in which the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia is housed in addition to the community premises. As part of the renovation, the permanent exhibition will probably be closed for a year and the offices will be relocated.

In addition to contributions of the Free State of Bavaria, the federal government, and other sponsors, the Jewish community bears almost ten percent of the renovation costs itself. Anyone who would like to support the preservation of the synagogue on Halderstrasse with a donation can find more information on the website of the Jewish Community in Swabia-Augsburg: <https://jmaugsburg.de/en/a-major-milestone-in-the-renovation-of-augsburgs-synagogue/>.



Connections marks its 5th year with this issue and we couldn't be happier or more proud. Thanks to you, our readers and contributors, as far as we know our newsletter is reaching people on five continents (North America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania!) and preserving the memories of our ancestors and our collective ties to the City of Augsburg.

You can read all the issues of **Connections** published to date on the *Descendants* page on the JMAS website: <https://jmaugsburg.de/engagement/netzwerk/nachfahrinnen/>.

We also thought you might appreciate seeing the video, *Finding Memories*, that the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia commissioned to commemorate the 2017 Descendants Reunion. It can be found at <https://vimeo.com/242238631>.

**NEXT
ISSUE**

Coming in December 2023... The theme for our next issue is:

The Power of Photos



The theme for our next issue is "The Power of Photos." What are the stories and meanings behind your vintage Augsburg photos? More and more, photos are the only vestiges of our family history. Some of us may know about the places and people in a photo and others of us know little to nothing. Yet, our photos can tell powerful stories, evoking emotion and understanding of our history. Our hope is that you may learn more about your family photos when sharing them with others in the DJCA community. We have already experienced descendants connecting because they saw a familiar face in another descendant's photo in our newsletter. Yes, another "**connection**" was made!

You are invited to send one or two old photos in .jpg format (greater or equal to 300 ppi). Please be sure to provide a caption that includes the names of the people in the photo as well as dates and location when possible. Please write a short description about why you are sharing this photo. What story does it reveal? What stirs you about it?

PLUS - - Do you have a photo of people in Augsburg before the war that features your family member with others whose names you don't know? Many of us do! We have received requests to have our readers help others in identifying those other people. We welcome you to send in one or two of those photos, and based on available space and the number we receive, we will put them into the December issue and hope for a response!

Please submit your photo and description, and any other articles, to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com no later than **October 15, 2023**.

We look forward to hearing from you! *Thank you.*



We welcome your feedback!

Please send your comments, suggestions or corrections to the editor at djcaugsburg@gmail.com. We are grateful to have received feedback from our readers on our December 2022 issue, and are pleased to post a few of your responses below.

Dear Bettina, Diane and Debbie,

Thank you so much for your letter! It is a real joy for me to mention you and your newsletter in the Augsburg Allgemeine - and it is a real gift for the Augsburg citizens to get news from you and the other descendants!

I hope you had wonderful Christmas and Chanukka Days and I wish you the very best for 2023. And whenever you are in Europe - come along and visit us in Augsburg!

All the best,

Angela Bachmair, Journalist; Co-founder, Augsburg Remembrance Workshop

Dear Debbie,

I enjoyed reading the newsletter. Quite a project, well written, and so artfully done.

And your (Editor's) letter was so fitting for these trying times.

Ilene Zwerin, Jackson Hole, WY

Editor's Note:

Based on the quality of the articles we receive and publish, requests to be added to our distribution list continue to come in. If someone you know would like to receive our communications, including

Connections, please let us know. Thank you. ☘