

CONNECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AUGSBURG



December 2023

Volume 6, Number 2

Since October 7 when Hamas terrorists attacked innocent men, women, and children in Israel, we have all been shaken by the brutality, cruelty, and cold-heartedness of hate.

Life is perilous for the many innocent victims of the conflict in Israel and Gaza. Both the Israelis who were viciously attacked by Hamas and the innocent Palestinians who have been terrorized by Hamas as well as

caught in the crossfire and bombing by the Israel Defense Forces have suffered. Everyone loses in war and we mourn all the innocents who have died.

We, the descendants of the Jewish community of Augsburg, are also struggling and hurting. Our perception of the world has changed, reminding us of Germany in the 1930s and Europe during the first half of the 1940s. We are witnessing the greatest rise in worldwide antisemitism in nearly 100 years. It is painful and scary. Our generation has now joined with our ancestors in witnessing pure evil directed against Jews and we will never forget it.

We condemn terror and hate in all its forms. We pray for the hostages, for the innocents enveloped in war, and for the safety of the students, elected leaders, and innocent people all over the world who are being attacked in synagogues, mosques, on the streets of their cities, and even in their homes in the name of hate.

Long ago, Aristotle said, "It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." We must stand together, focus on the light, and not let the darkness of prejudice, hate, fear, and anger define us. We continue to hope that soon there will be enough light to overcome all that confronts us. ☸

**This is the final sentence of the Mourner's Kaddish, the Jewish prayer traditionally recited in memory of those who have passed away.*



The City of Augsburg Is the City of Peace

Augsburg, known as the "City of Peace," has taken steps to promote peace and to fight growing antisemitism, hostility toward Muslims, and all forms of prejudice since October 7. Indeed the City of Peace is living up to its name! In addition to other actions, a "Nie wieder ist jetzt." ("Never Again is Now.") banner has been hanging on the administration building on *Rathausplatz* (City Hall Square) since November 23. More recently, the city launched its "*Wir alle sind Augsburg.*" ("We are all Augsburg.") initiative. The city's website, when translated, explains that this statement: "is a commitment to peaceful coexistence. Because peace is only possible together." ☸

Additional articles related to this topic may be found on Pages 3 and 4

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DJCA Editorial Board

Co-Chairpersons

Diane Castiglione
Bettina Kaplan

Editor

Deborah Sturm Rausch

Logo Artist

Loren Jaffe

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- Build Community
- Preserve History
- Conduct Outreach
- Support the Jewish Museum
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A Message from our Co-Chairpersons

Written by Bettina Kaplan

As we look back, we are amazed that almost six years have passed since we organized and launched the DJCA. This makes us reflect on the reasons why we created the DJCA and continue publishing our newsletter. We believe that these efforts, in a small way, both contribute to the preservation of our families' histories and add to the documentation of German and world history. In so doing, we hope to inspire others to keep telling these stories.

Creating this descendants' network has had many positive results. We have reinvigorated old family connections and facilitated new ones. We have established relationships with a variety of Augsburgers and Augsburg institutions, including the JMAS, local remembrance groups, city officials, and others who are interested in our history. More importantly, they share our interest in using this history to look to the future. If we have another descendants' reunion – and we certainly hope we do – our network will be the backbone to support it.

As we write these words, we are mindful of the fact that we are watching the various stages of war between Israel and Hamas. There are no words to express our sorrow over these events. It's hard not to think about history repeating itself and this underscores another reason for our commitment to this descendants' network. We can't allow the world to forget these stories.

Therefore, we continue together on this journey. Whether we write an article, share feedback or ideas, ask questions, or spend time reading the newsletter, we learn more about who we are and we teach, guide, and inspire all of us, descendants and non-descendants alike. Remembering the stories of our past will help everyone keep an eye on our future. ☸

From the Editor

Deborah Sturm Rausch

These past few months have been very difficult for many of us. The war in Israel and Gaza has sparked emotions from all sides, and rightly so. We have lost family members, friends, and our trust and belief that we are safe -- even in the diaspora. Even more tragically, we have seen families torn apart by their opinions about the conflict. I mourn for all the innocents.

When I learned of the utter brutality, abuse, and cruelty of Hamas in Israel, I had a gut reaction. I flashed back to the photos and written descriptions of the same cruelty committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* during the Holocaust which I had seen when I spent time working with the Office of Special Investigations of the United States Justice Department regarding Nazi war criminals who had found haven in the United States. Thus, putting together this issue of **Connections**, has been doubly emotional for me. As I read many of the articles we received, I could not help but draw a line from the lost identities of people in photographs and the memorial bands we descendants have created in Germany to honor those who were murdered there, to the lost family members in Israel today and the many memorials being created today to remember them.

As the Torah says, "... in every generation they rise up to destroy us." My father's (z"l) words of long ago also echo in my my head, as he constantly repeated, "Never forget that you are Jewish first, because if you forget, someone will come along to remind you." I'm reminded, Dad. I only wish that you had not been so correct.

I continue to pray for peace. I continue to believe that we, the Jewish people, have a right to exist and to have even just one country dedicated to Jewish ideals. And though it isn't perfect, that place is Israel where Jews have lived for more than 3,000 years. Imagine how many might have been saved if it had existed in the 1940s.

The poignancy of pictures can be seen and felt in the pages in this issue and we are grateful to everyone who sent in stories! Thanks to our contributors, the lives and legacies of the Jewish people of Augsburg continue on. Keeping memories alive is one way of fighting back against antisemitism, and I am more committed than ever to working on **Connections** and to our group.

The theme of the June 2024 issue of **Connections** is our culinary heritage. We hope you will take this opportunity to reflect on, and share stories about, how some foods connect you to your Augsburg family! (See page 15 for further information).

Wishing everyone a very happy, healthy, peaceful, and safe 2024. ☸



L-R: Diane Castiglione and Bettina Kaplan



Deborah Sturm Rausch

Letter from JMAS Director Carmen Reichert

Dear descendants,

I hope my message finds you well wherever you are now.

We are following the current situation – in Israel and all over the world – with great sorrow and solidarity. Sometimes, we feel reminded of the worst times your ancestors experienced in our town. Therefore, we feel in these days particularly connected to all of you.



Carmen Reichert, Director

Our museum had to close because of the events. Although the situation in Augsburg remained calm, the situation on our premises, in the center of the city, with the Jewish community next door, was too uncertain to leave it open with the security measures that we had. There were several pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Augsburg; two 18-year-old young men tried to set fire to the Israeli flag on the town hall square, which was prevented by the courageous intervention of a woman. Unlike in Berlin, where the situation is much more complicated, there have been no attacks on Jewish people or the synagogue so far and we can hope that it stays that way.

As a Jewish Museum, we stand with Israel and the Jewish community in whose house we are housed. Protecting the community, our employees, and visitors is our top priority. Of course, we were not idle during this time of closure. We were present at the rallies in memory of the victims of terror and in support of Israel. Thanks to the support of the Jewish community with their security, we were able to reopen the museum after a whole month.

During closure, we also started the process of preparing ourselves and our guides for the fact that our guests will now have questions about Israel and the current situation. We are grateful that we are receiving solidarity and support from many people and organizations during these times, not only from the authorities and the city of Augsburg, but also from individuals who write to us, leave flowers at the door, or donate to our museum or the Jewish community of Augsburg.

And we are thankful that, despite everything, we were able to perform the *Jüdische Kulturwoche*, week of Jewish culture, from November 5th to 12th. It was important to us to hold the *Kulturwoche*, especially in view of the temporary museum closure. Community President Alexander Mazo and I agreed that canceling Jewish culture week would have sent the wrong signal. The week was a complete success. Almost all events were fully booked and people of all ages experienced Jewish culture. We started the week with a concert by the Jewish Chamber Orchestra of Munich in the synagogue on Halderstrasse. During the week, a guided tour in a brewery combined with a presentation on Jewish contributions to Bavarian beer culture was a highlight. Also, the dialogue of a Jewish and a Christian theologian on the meaning of bread and wine in the respective religions was sold out days before the event. We consider the high number of participants in all our events as a sign of solidarity.

Let us hope that this solidarity will stay with us and that my next letter will find you all in better terms. May the nightmare that started on October 7 come to an end soon and may all the hostages return to safety.

Best wishes to all of you,
Carmen

Meet Hans-Eberhard Schurk, Foundation Chairman of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia

In this issue, we are for the second time setting aside "Meet the Staff" to instead introduce you to Dr. Hans-Eberhard Schurk, the chairman of the Foundation of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia.

*Special thanks to Michael Bernheim who conducts the local interviews featured in **Connections**. Michael Bernheim, a descendant of the Bernheim family, lives in Augsburg.*



Dr. Hans-Eberhard Schurk

Introduction: My name is Hans-Eberhard Schurk. I am chairman of the foundation that provides financial support for the synagogue and the Jewish Museum. After studying electrical engineering, I worked for BMW in the area of data and system technology. Then I decided to start a new career as a professor at the Augsburg University for Applied Sciences. In 2004, I was appointed the university's president. In 2017, after I had retired, I took my present position in the foundation.

What is the role of the foundation? The role of the foundation is to preserve the heritage of the synagogue and to enable the ongoing operation of the museum.

What do you like best about your position with the foundation? I enjoy being in contact with many people and I am eager to keep learning.

What is the biggest challenge associated with your position? Making sure that there is always enough money for the further development of the museum.

How did you become involved in supporting the Jewish Museum? In 2017, Helmut Hartmann, fellow-member of the German-Israeli Society and then chairman of the foundation, asked me if I wanted to become his successor. Before that, I had no connection with the foundation at all.

What is your goal? As a member of the German-Israeli Society, I want to show that I feel attached to the people of Israel and that I work actively and publicly against antisemitism.

What do you feel is the most important aspect of the work being done by the museum and the foundation? In my view, it is to convey Jewish culture to the population at large. This includes establishing a good neighborly relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens. In my time in university management, part of my responsibility was looking after students from abroad. This helps me now.

What do you like to do when you are not at work? Singing in the choir "Augsburger Vokalensemble" and dancing the Argentine tango.

What is your favorite food? Pasta

What is your favorite travel destination? The North Sea

What superpower would you like to have? Often, I wish I could understand people better – their motives, why they behave as they behave. ☸

Erinnerungsbänder Restoration Efforts

By Michael Bernheim. Michael is a descendant of the Bernheim family. He lives in Augsburg.

In April this year, descendants of the Einstein family came to Augsburg. With Monika Müller from the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia as a guide, we walked through Kriegshaber where the Einsteins' ancestors lived. When we gathered in front of the *Erinnerungsband* (remembrance band) at 185 Ulmerstrasse, the Einsteins' former home, I saw Hilary Anson's startled look.

And then I knew that we really must do something about the bad condition of many of these remembrance posts once and for all. In the past, many attempts were taken to remove the ugly traces of weathering, corrosion, pollution, and staining but all were in vain.

Fritz Schwarzbäcker, head of the *Erinnerungs Werkstatt Augsburg* (EWA), agreed at once to figure out how to restore Augsburg's special memorials to victims of National Socialism.

On May 30, the two of us took our bicycles and spent two hours riding from post to post, taking photos, recording, and rating the condition of every single post by applying the Bavarian school grading system: 1 is best, 6 is worst. The result was sobering: among thirty-two posts there are no 1s, but six 5s and three 6s.

What makes this complicated is that, while we see all kinds of discoloration, stains, and spots, there is no correlation between the degree of damage and age, location, etc. For example, there are two posts that were installed on the same day that look completely different. The oldest posts (including the ones on Ulmerstrasse), made of the copper/zinc alloy tombac, all look unacceptable. But many of the newer steel posts are also in very poor condition.

Fritz and I decided to tackle the tombac ones first. I knew an artisan shop that specializes in tombac and brass, which is an old family business in the historic center of Augsburg. With the help of Felix Bellaire, who works for the city of Augsburg, they dismantled the remembrance post for the Englaender family at 6 Annastrasse, a tombac post which had turned black. In a few weeks, they returned shining like gold.

The big question is for how long will this last? In the cemetery across the street from my apartment, there are tombac nameplates produced by the same shop which after a year and a half still look brand new. So, there is hope.

Supported by Mr. Bellaire, the next ones to undergo this treatment will be the posts from Ulmerstrasse. Additionally, I am in discussion with the company that produced the steel posts to see how we can restore them. Our aim is to present dignified *Erinnerungsbänder* to the descendants and to everybody who sees them. ☸



6 Annastrasse
remembrance bands
before and after the
new treatment

Thinking of Israel: Solidarity event in the Augsburg synagogue

By Michael Bernheim

In Germany, many of the reactions to the brutal Hamas attack on the Israeli population on October 7 ranged from critical statements against Israel's Palestine policy to downright anti-Jewish and antisemitic actions. This was especially the case in bigger cities, such as Augsburg, with a high percentage of Muslims. The official response to the Hamas raid, be it by the city administration or the Christian churches, was in favor of Israel, but it was reserved support, and, from my point of view, too reserved.

It was more beneficial that, on October 26, the Jewish community held a memorial and solidarity event in the synagogue. Given the heightened security situation, attendance was by invitation only. In the end, the synagogue was half-full.



Remarks were made by the Jewish community's new spokesperson, Hermann Bredl, the community's president, Alexander Mazo, the Mayor of Augsburg, Eva Weber, and the director of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia, Carmen Reichert. The new rabbi, Asher Goldshmid, concluded with a prayer, followed by the *Hatikvah* led by the Schammes, Mykhaylo Abramovych, and his wife.



The memorial event took only a half hour but it was very intense. The description of what the Israeli victims had to, and still must, bear and the similarities to the Holocaust kept the congregation breathless. But the Mayor's commitment to solidarity with Israel and with Jewish life in Germany was crystal clear.

I was grateful for the opportunity to be there. ☸

Above: Mayor Eva Weber; Middle: Rabbi Asher Goldshmid;
Below: Hermann Bredl welcomes the audience.



The Power of Photos

The theme for this issue of **Connections**, "The Power of Photos" has yielded quite the response. Thank you to those who sent in photos and articles!

Wedding Photo Revelations

By Bettina Kaplan. Bettina lives in Los Angeles, and is the granddaughter of Walter and Ellen Feldberg (née Arnold) of the Arnold and Landauer families of Augsburg.

Upon my family roots visit to Augsburg in 2012, I brought the picture of my grandparents' wedding (below) to show our guide. I did not know where it was taken, nor did I recognize most of the people in the photo. Our guide pleasantly surprised me and recognized the location of where the photo was taken which happened to be our hotel! Fast forward ten plus years, and after research and help from others, I am now able to identify a majority of family members representing the Arnold, Kahn, and Landauer families. Additionally, today this photo is included in a book about the history of the hotel. This is an example of the power of photos!

What touches me in this photo is how my grandfather is proudly wearing his Iron Cross from World War I on his elegant suit and yet, in the coming year, he began planning his young family's emigration, which took place in 1938. My grandmother, Ellen, would only see one family member again: her brother Hans (standing behind and to the left of the bride). It is a reminder of how life can change so quickly.



Family picture at the wedding of Ellen Arnold and Walter Feldberg in the atrium of the "Hotel zu den Drei Mohren" (today known as the Hotel Maximilian), Augsburg, May 1932.

Precious Heirloom

By Dan Schumm. Dan lives in San Francisco, California, and is a descendant of the Binswanger family.

My mother, Gabriele Binswanger, was born in Augsburg. Her family arrived in Augsburg in 1865 after moving from the nearby town of Osterberg to rebuild their family liqueur and vinegar distillery after it had been destroyed by fire. They purchased a building near the center of town which

housed apartments for the numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins above, and in whose basement and courtyard the new distillery was located. Offices and a store were located on the ground floor. The family flourished in their new home and the business grew to include distilleries and stores in nearby Regensburg and Munich.

The hand painted earthenware bottle pictured is of a bottle (empty!) of Enzian liqueur produced by the Augsburg distillery. This bottle was a precious heirloom for my family. When my mother escaped from Germany to Palestine, this bottle travelled with her. It also accompanied her to subsequent homes in New York and California where it always occupied a prominent place and served as one poignant reminder to all of us of a family and life that had once been. The bottle is currently on loan to the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia.



Can you help identify those pictured here from the "Good Old Days?"

By Deborah Sturm Rausch. Deborah lives in upstate New York, is the daughter of Walter Sturm, and a descendant of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld / the Heilbronner/Steinfeld families of Augsburg.

My father, Walter Sturm, often told stories of the "good old days" back in Augsburg where he and friends would gather together with friends, often at the Sportplatz (where we suspect this photo was taken), to sing songs while he happily accompanied them on his accordion. His love of music was infectious. In fact our entire family's love of, and connection to, music is a legacy that has endured throughout the generations.

I have always wondered who is pictured with him in this photo. If you know any of these people, I would greatly appreciate it if you could help me put names to faces. Thank you!



Walter Sturm (center with accordion) in Augsburg, circa 1937.

Two Photos Tell the Whole Story

By Diane Fischer Castiglione. Diane lives in Gaithersburg, MD and is the daughter of Liese Fischer, a member of the Einstein family of Kriegshaber.)

The photo on the right is the 1922 engagement photograph of my maternal grandparents, Moritz Einstein and Lydia Seligman. I grew up seeing this photo every day in our living room and was entranced by it. I especially loved how elegantly they were dressed. They looked like quite the young couple of the 1920s. I can only imagine how filled with hope they were as they embarked on their life together.



Lydia Seligman and Moritz Einstein, 1922.

Fast forward to November 15, 1939 when they sent the photo below to their children (my mother and her brother) whom they had sent to England on a Kindertransport just four months earlier. Granted, 17 years had passed and anyone would look older. However, I think my grandparents look considerably older than one would expect, especially since photos taken in the early and mid-1930s continued to show a relatively youthful, still fashionably dressed, couple enjoying family life. More recent events had clearly taken their toll and the portrait has a doleful, fatalistic air. Indeed, on the back they wrote the following to their children: "Never let your courage falter, and do not lose your trust in G-d. He alone can someday reunite us! May the dear Lord protect and keep you. Your loving parents."



Lydia and Moritz Einstein, 1939.

My grandparents were deported from Kriegshaber four and a half years later, in March 1943, and died in Auschwitz.

For me, these two photos summarize the story not just of my grandparents and not even of my mother's family, but of the fate of the European Jewish community more generally.

An Unusual Reunion

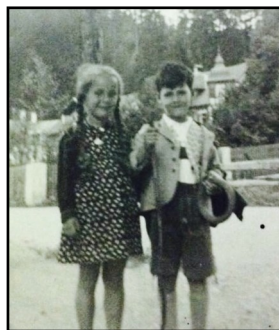
By George Sturm. George lives in Englewood, New Jersey. He is the son of Anna and Max Sturm, and the grandson of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld.

My family had a circle of close friends, the *Freundekreis*, among whom was the Lamfromm family: Marie and Paul with their three daughters, Urschi, Gertrud, and Eva. Eva, their youngest (b. 1929) was a few months older than I was (b. 1930) but we were in the same class. Blue-eyed and blond pigtailed, she was probably my very first heartthrob, as this photo of 1936 may attest.

Unlike so many others, the Lamfromms were doubly fortunate: they fled Germany already in 1937, a year before the fateful Kristallnacht; and, already having family on the West coast, did not settle in the New York area but traveled immediately to Portland, Oregon where Paul and Marie founded the business that became the world-famous Columbia Sportswear.

Fast forward: Sitting in my library on a Saturday afternoon in the spring of 2011, I picked up the ringing phone and heard a female voice saying, "You may not remember me. My name is Eva Labby, but you knew me as Eva Lamfromm." Without skipping a beat, I replied, "Remember you? Of course. You had blue eyes and blond pigtails." Knowing that I had been invited by the Jewish Museum to spend a week in Augsburg in connection with the publication of the *Lebenslinien* volume on my family and participate in workshops for high school students, Eva was calling to inquire if I thought it had been a worthwhile experience. She had received the identical invitation for the following year (2011). I immediately told her that it had been for me a life-altering event and I strongly urged her to accept the invitation.

It was the beginning of a remarkable reunion, first by way of many emails followed by the happy tidings that Eva and her husband Arnie were coming east for a visit with one of their daughters. Needless to say, we were both delighted at the prospect of meeting in the flesh in Hoboken, New Jersey. We couldn't resist taking a snapshot of the two of us after a separation of some 75 years.



(L) Eva Lamfromm and George Sturm in Augsburg, 1936, and (R) in Hoboken, New Jersey.

My Grandfather Willy Bernheim with Unknown Friends

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

The photo shows a large car on a country road, possibly in the Alpine foothills south of Augsburg. Posing in front of the car are three young adults: my grandfather Willy (third from left) and an unknown couple, likely on a Saturday afternoon excursion. Compared to modern habits, they are very well dressed. The car is a

Horch, in the 1920s and 30s the leading luxury brand in Germany, possibly a 1930 model. The photo must have been taken before 1933. Does anyone recognize the other two people?



Theme articles continue on Page 7

Difficult Memories

By Marc Codron. Marc is the grandson of Sigmund Weber of Augsburg and lives in Israel.

My late grandfather Sigmund Weber, who was from Augsburg (18 December 1921 – 14 January 1999), could never speak when he showed me these two pictures.

He pointed himself out in both – they were seemingly both from a newspaper of sorts – but he would only point and sometimes just say the word. “Nazis.” When I asked him what was going on in the picture, he never answered. It triggered difficult memories.

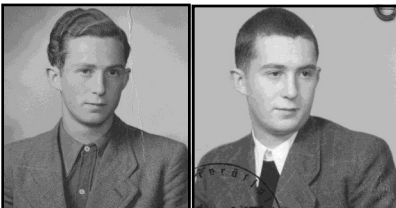
Perhaps someone can shed some light on these pictures. There is a small red arrow pointing out my grandfather in both pictures.



Tale of Two Photos

By Rick Landman. Rick is the son of Henry Landman and lives in New York City.

My parents and I were visiting Augsburg in the 1980s when my camera broke. My dad said, “No problem; there is a camera store right around the corner.” As we walked to the store, I realized that my father hadn’t been in Augsburg since 1945. When I questioned him about how he knew about the store, he answered, “That is where I got my passport photo. I’m sure that it is still there.” It was. We went in and my father looked shocked. He said that was the man who took his passport photo in 1939. It wasn’t. But it was his son, who now owned the business. The man was able to fix my camera in the dark room and saved my film. I was so grateful and impressed with the continuity of the business.



Pre-Kristallnacht

After Dachau

I combined a photo of my father, Henry Landman, which was taken shortly before Kristallnacht and his passport photo taken before he left Augsburg. You will notice that his hair was shorter and that his face was fuller after Dachau. Dad explained that is what you look like after eating only bread for weeks and then stuffing your face with everything you can when you got back home.

While in Dachau, Henry wouldn’t eat the raw fish that they dumped on the floor or the slop that they gave the

inmates. All he ate was the bread. He told me that, since he was so young and small, some of the other men gave him their bread. After he got out of Dachau, and before he left for London on April 15, 1939, his hair grew and he ate enough to gain some weight.

I think he only had one good suit so that is the same in both photos. Yekkes were stereotyped for their good suits but my dad only had one. It shows up again in a photo of Henry on the SS Harding on the day before landing in New York City in November 1939.



Henry Landman, in the center with longer hair and wearing his suit with a white handkerchief in his jacket pocket, onboard the SS Harding, 1939.

Thanking a Liberator at Dachau

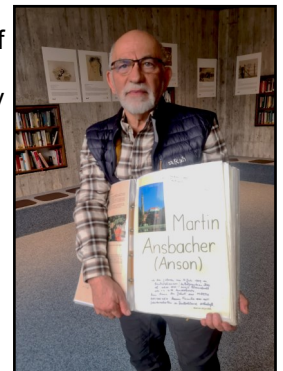
By Steven Anson. Steven lives in Glasgow, Scotland, and is the son of Beate “Pat” Anson (née Einstein), a member of the Einstein family of Kriegshaber.

At first sight, the veteran soldier in uniform has no obvious connection to the Jewish community of Augsburg and its descendants, and yet his actions make the connection.

The veteran is Bud Gahs, Private First Class, No. 33717046, 222 Infantry Division, Anti-Tank Company of the 42nd Rainbow Division of the U.S. 7th Army who, with other soldiers, liberated Dachau concentration camp on 29 April 1945.

Bud, who still fit into his uniform and was wearing his campaign medals, was attending ceremonies at the Dachau Memorial Site on 28-30 April 2023 to mark the liberation of Dachau 78 years before.

My wife Hilary and I met him by chance when I was being interviewed by Andre Sharf, a curator in the Research Offices of the camp about my father’s experience and life as a former prisoner. My dad (Martin Ansbacher now Anson) was a regular attendee at the Jewish Sports Club (Sportplatz) in Augsburg. This is where he met his future wife, my mum, Beate Einstein.



Steven Anson holding Martin’s life story at the Dachau Book of Remembrance Project

Theme articles continue on Page 8

I saw Bud out of the corner of my eye as he moved from one office to another. My curiosity got the better of me and I asked Andre who that was. I was then told, "he is a liberator."

Now this is not a word that is in most people's daily vocabulary, so it took a wee while to figure out what he meant. "You mean a liberator of Dachau?" I asked in absolute astonishment, "Yes, a former U.S. soldier," came the reply. And I decided immediately I have just got to meet this man.

It was a very emotional experience and a rare chance to meet a sprightly 96-year-old former soldier and liberator. I explained that my father was a former Dachau prisoner – for seven weeks after *Reichspogromnacht* (Kristallnacht), released on 30 December 1938.

I thanked him, on behalf of the prisoners from Augsburg, Landshut, and other places whom they managed to save, and those they could not, for their bravery and courage for dealing with the horrific situation they must have found in the camp after liberation.



(L-R) Bud Gahs and Steven Anson, April 2023.

Now let me tell you the story of the composite picture (left). It shows Bud and me shaking hands in the research offices, and was set up by Hilary. The image was taken by Erin Faith Allen who was escorting Bud and his wife on

the visit. Erin is the proud daughter of a Vietnam veteran, a WW2 investigative researcher, and a member of the American Legion Auxiliary whose work has directly impacted three hundred plus families.

The plaque commemorating the camp's liberation is to be found at the camp's entrance gates beside the wording "Arbeit Macht Frei." I used my image of the plaque, and had it inserted behind us to help give the image context which was seamlessly carried out by a very good friend and Photoshop manipulator, Mike McCreery.

The other person we met by chance in the Dachau Visitor Centre was Magdalena, a student from Kriegshaber whom we had met a few days earlier when Father Augustine of the local church hosted the us and my cousins, Diane and Michael Castiglione, for a delicious afternoon tea. Magdalena is carrying out new research into the history of the pre-1930s Jewish community of Kriegshaber with the support of Father Augustine.

At the afternoon tea we also met 98-year-old Doris Zelt, who, as a young girl, used to play with Diane's mum Lee and my mum Beate in the back garden. Of course, that was until the National Socialists told Doris's father that she couldn't play with Jews anymore.

Amazingly, Doris came to Edinburgh as an au-pair after the war in 1948 to learn English. She came to Glasgow around March 21 or 22, and, while she met my dad Martin, she couldn't meet up with my mum as she was in the local Samaritan's Hospital giving birth to me! She never came to Glasgow again, and she can't remember why. ☘



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. Please include photos (.jpgs please) and contact information with your submission. Thank you!

The Hausmann-Rosenau Family

By Andreu Lopez Andreu. Andreu is the great nephew of Elka Hausmann of Augsburg who was married to his great uncle Ramón Lopez de Jorge. He resides in Mallorca, Spain.

I would like to tell you the story of the Hausmann-Rosenau family of Augsburg.

My great-aunt Elka Hausmann was born in Augsburg in 1913. Her grandfather Gabriel Hausmann was an employee of Augsburg's Jewish community. Her parents, Heinrich and Emilie Hausmann (née Rosenau), lived together with Elka and their other children, Julius, Margarete, and Fritz, at 44 Maximilian Street (now part of the Maximilian Hotel, formerly known as the *Drei Mohren*), which was close to their business which sold blankets, furs, and other articles.



Elka T. Hausmann, November 15, 1954, La Paz, Bolivia.

In 1936, three of the siblings fled Germany: Elka to Bolivia and Fritz (Fred) to the United States. Julius later fled to Argentina. Probably the three of them (Julius and Elka for sure) arrived in Trieste where they embarked to their different destinations.

Unfortunately, Heinrich and Emilie were later deported to Theresienstadt where they were murdered. Their daughter Margarete, after enduring slave labor in the Augsburg balloon factory, was deported to Auschwitz where she was murdered. Before this fatal outcome, they had to suffer all the humiliations that the Nazi government imposed on them.

Heinrich's family came originally from Harburg and Emilie's from Gunzenhausen. In that city the first pogrom of the Nazi era took place (with wide international resonance) with at least two dead. One of the dead was Max Rosenau, Emilie's uncle.

In the United States, there are many descendants of the Rosenau family. Most of them had emigrated because of the difficulties imposed on the Jews in the middle of the 19th century (eight out of ten siblings emigrated, including their widowed mother). The rest emigrated (most of them to the United States and Palestine) during the 1934 pogrom in Gunzenhausen, which in the end saved their lives.

The Nazis murdered at least 15 of Elka's immediate family members. Only those who were able to flee in time survived: her cousin Walter Keller and his wife (United States), her uncle Ferdinand Stein and his two daughters (London, England), her aunt Frieda Heumann (née Rosenau) and her two children (United States).

If you know anything about the Hausmann-Rosenau family, please feel free to contact me via the DJCA email.

Introducing our Children to Augsburg

By Howard Fleischmann of Cleveland, Ohio, who is the son of Susi Fleischmann (née Neuburger) of Augsburg.

In July, my wife Barbara and I took our daughters, Samantha and Rebecca, and our son-in-law James to Germany to show them some of the history of our family.

My mother, Susan Neuburger, was born in Ichenhausen in 1927 and moved shortly afterward to Augsburg.

She happily lived in Augsburg with her parents, Heinrich and Hilda, and her sister Lotte. The Neuburger family left Germany shortly after Kristallnacht and lived in London for a year before immigrating to New York, residing in Washington Heights. My grandfather had been interred in Dachau for about four weeks immediately after November 9, 1938.

Barbara and I had been to Augsburg several times previously and were anxious to show the wonderful city to our daughters and son-in-law.

Since our last visit, we became acquainted with a distant cousin who still lives in Augsburg with her family. Daniela Tinzmann, her husband Wolfgang, and their grown children, Anabel and Fabian, greeted us warmly and we spent a very enjoyable four days in their company. Daniela's great-grandfather Moses and my grandfather were brothers. Daniela's grandfather, Salo, survived the war in Augsburg and her father Lothar still also lives in Augsburg today.

During our visit we received a private tour of the Augsburg synagogue and museum from the museum's Education Director Frank Schillinger. We saw several pieces in the museum donated by the Neuburger family and for the first time saw the restored synagogue. On previous visits, my wife and I had seen the synagogue only in various stages of repair.

We also visited the house where my mother, her sister, and my grandparents lived in Augsburg and were able to closely duplicate a picture my mother and aunt took on their terrace in 1937, only this time with my daughters Samantha and Rebecca.

We also visited Ichenhausen, where we were greeted warmly at the community center/synagogue and spent time at the cemetery where my great grandmother is interred.

After leaving Augsburg, we finished our time in Germany visiting my father's birthplace of Erlangen and the village of Aub, where Fleischmann ancestors are buried.



(L-R) Front row - Rebecca Fleischmann, Samantha Christy
(L-R) Back Row - Wolfgang Tinzmann, Fabian Tinzmann, Daniela Tinzmann, Barbara Fleischmann, Anabel Tinzmann, Howard Fleischmann, James Christy



(L-R) Rebecca Fleischmann on left
Samantha Christy on right duplicating
B&W 1937 photo of sisters Susi
Neuburger Fleischmann on left and
Lotte Neuburger Buff on right

Augsburg Through the Ages

By George Sturm and his son Max Sturm. They are descendants of Anna and Max Sturm, and Hugo and Lina Steinfeld. Both live in New Jersey.

George Sturm: When I was a little boy growing up in Augsburg in the '30s, my dad, Max Sturm, used to take me on walks through town, pointing out landmarks and telling me about the history of places like the Weaver House, the Fuggerei, the Red Gate, the Golden Chamber of the Rathaus, and the *Augustusbrunnen*, the fountain in the plaza before the City Hall in honor of Roman emperor Augustus.

The first time I revisited my home town after the war, I clearly recall the apprehension I felt then, on the one hand so eager to witness again the sights, sounds, and smells of my childhood, and on the other hand, the encounter with Augsburgers and wondering where they had stood and what they might have done to Jews during the Nazi years.

Throughout my life, though, my unabashed affinity for the place of my birth has been inextinguishable. Augsburg is a part of me, just as it had been a part of my forefathers. On the day of our emigration in October 1939, my uncle Dr. Paul Englander and his wife Hedwig (both buried in the Jewish cemetery in Augsburg) gave me a picture book of Augsburg with this inscription: "To our dear Günter" (my German name) "to remind him of his beautiful native city." This book is my sole souvenir of my childhood. I have been thumbing its pages for the past 85 years.

Max Sturm: I was named "Max" as a tribute to my paternal grandfather Max to honor and remember him. I never knew my grandfather (it is Jewish tradition to name children not after those who are here, but after those who were once here) but being named "Max" created extra motivation for me to get to know him, his character, his world, his story.

When our son was born in October, my wife and I named him Archer August Sturm, choosing "August" as his middle name not to honor and remember a particular person, but a particular place: Augsburg, Germany - - the homeland of his grandfather, great grandparents, great uncles, aunts, and cousins, some of whom were fortunate enough to escape Nazi Germany, some of whom were not, all of whom were forever changed by that place at that time.

For us, this middle name is a way to connect our son to the world he will come to know. Few of his American family will share his surname Sturm, but all of them are descendants of Augsburg. And maybe even more profoundly, this middle name is a way to connect our son to the world from which he came - - his lineage and inherited identity. He is not simply a Sturm, but a Sturm with origins from Augsburg, the second oldest city in Germany which celebrated its 2000th anniversary in 1985, and a place with a history worth knowing and remembering.

I did not experience the joys and perils of Augsburg, Germany throughout the 1930s and neither will our son. But our families' history is our history. It has become our story to own and protect, our story to honor and remember, our story to tell and continue telling for generations and generations.✿



(L-R) George Sturm (holding baby Archer) and Max Sturm



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

How did the pre-war community in Augsburg view itself? How did it present itself to the public through architecture?

By Malin Drees, Ph.D., Curator, Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia

The entrance to the synagogue in Halderstrasse mirrors the self-perception of Augsburg's pre-war Jewish community. Five years before this synagogue was consecrated, the Jewish community had launched a competition for this new construction. (Klotz, 38 f.)

The design by Fritz Landauer and Heinrich Lömpel won the competition. However, before the building was conceived and the final construction work started, the municipal council (*Gemeinderat*) traveled with both architects to synagogues in Bamberg, Frankfurt a. M., and Cologne, among others. The foundation stone of the synagogue was laid on April 30, 1914, meaning when the First World War broke out on July 28 of the same year, construction work was already in full progress. In order to plan the interior of the synagogue, further trips to various synagogues were undertaken together with the district Rabbi Grünfeld, Albert Dann (then a member of the community council), and the architects. (Klotz, 42 f.) The Augsburg synagogue was finally consecrated on April 4, 1917. Dr. Richard Grünfeld wrote a commemorative publication to mark this occasion, highlighting both the Jewish history of Augsburg and the building by Fritz Landauer and Heinrich Lömpel.

Grünfeld refers to the long history of the Jewish community in Augsburg and also highlights the stone replica of the seal of the medieval Jewish community of Augsburg above the central gate of the synagogue. (Grünfeld, 75) Even though the replica does not include the medieval inscription, it is inscribed with the year 1298.

Thus, the architectural reference to the so-called first Jewish community is very conspicuous and also prominently placed. This replica of the seal can be seen as a reference to the position of the medieval Jewish community in the city of Augsburg. (Schönhagen, 20)



Main entrance of Augsburg's synagogue in Halderstrasse showing the replica of the medieval seal and the pine nut. Photo: Ilya Kotov/JMAS

How does the replica of the seal form a connection to Augsburg's medieval Jewish community?

The first written evidence of Jewish life in Augsburg dates to 1212. The first Jewish community lived in close contact with the majority Christian community. (Schönhagen, 30) Since the 13th century, Jews lived under the protection of the king as so-called chamber servants in return for the payment of taxes. However, this could not prevent the so-called *Rintfleisch* persecution (pogroms) in southern Germany in 1298, during which several Jewish communities were brutally murdered. The city of Augsburg protected the Jewish community. In return, they guaranteed to build a section of the city wall. (Schönhagen, 32 f.) They sealed this promise in a document dated August 23, 1298. The seal on the document shows a heraldic double-headed eagle with a so-called Jewish hat between their heads, the tip of which protrudes into the surrounding writing. Andreas Lehnertz classifies the seal as a symbolic seal. The inscriptions on the seal are in both Hebrew and Latin and can be translated in German, reproduced as follows: *Siegel Gemeinde* [Augsburg] (Hebrew), *Siegel der Juden Augsburgs* (Latin). (Lehnertz, 440). In English: *Seal of the Augsburg Community*, *Seal of the Jews of Augsburg*, respectively.

In past research, the significance of the double-headed eagle as part of the seal of the Jewish community of Augsburg has often been interpreted as a symbol for the "affiliation of the Jews to the royal chamber." Lehnertz re-examines the seal and presents an interpretation that emphasizes the eagle's inner-Jewish symbolism. He questions whether the seal was intended to represent an imperial symbol. Although he considers it highly unlikely that the seal's creator intended to depict an imperial symbol, Lehnertz emphasizes that the Christian interpretation as a symbol of empire may also have been good for the Jewish community. He further emphasizes that many Jewish seals played with ambiguity, so that this may also have been the case here.

Lehnertz looks at examples of depictions of eagles in a Jewish context and incorporates modern research on this symbolism.

Thereby he shows the eagle in the Jewish context can stand for the presence of God or divine power. (Lehnertz, 442-447). The content of the document also refers to the participation of the Jewish community in the city society and the double seal emphasizes that the contract was concluded in the interests of the Jews and the Christians. (Lehnertz, 449). It was therefore important to the pre-war community to refer to the Jewish existence in Augsburg dating back to the 13th century right at the entrance to the synagogue. At the same time, it also emphasized its own connection with the city by having a pine nut (*Zirbelnuss*), the symbol of Augsburg, clearly visible above the seal at the entrance.



Replica of the medieval seal in the current exhibition of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia. Photo: Ilya Kotov/JMAS

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!**

JMAS and Augsburg's Jewish Community Mark European Day of Jewish Culture

On September 3, 2023, the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) and Augsburg's Jewish Community marked this year's European Day of Jewish Culture with a pop-up exhibit in both the JMAS and the former synagogue in Kriegshaber. Because this year's theme was "memory", the museum decided to focus on memories of both the Halderstrasse and Kriegshaber synagogues. Sarah Schwab, JMAS' new director for project management and events organization, contacted DJCA to see if any descendants wished to share their thoughts. She was very pleased with the number of contributions she received and included them in the exhibit. The exhibit was so popular that they decided to leave it up for a full week instead of just the one day as originally planned.

Gernot Römer Grove planted in the Negev

This past June, one year after the passing of Gernot Römer, a commemorative plaque was installed and a grove bearing his name was planted in the German States Forest in the Negev. Mr. Römer was known for his numerous books chronicling the history of Jews living in Augsburg during the period of National Socialism. He was also instrumental in the creation of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia.

Additionally, he served as Chairman of the German – Israeli Society. Römer worked for many years as a journalist and Editor of the *Augsburger Allgemeine* (the leading newspaper in Augsburg).

The expressions of gratitude many descendants wrote as a tribute to Gernot Römer in the December 2020 issue of **Connections** (Volume 3, Number 2) meant so much to him. We are forever grateful to him for all he did.



Plaque on a recognition column in the Wald der Deutschen Länder Anerkennungssäulen (Forest of the German States)

St. Anna High School Remembers Jewish Students

On June 23, 2023, Katrin Glatt, a teacher of history at Gymnasium bei St. Anna in Augsburg, and 15 students organized a small gathering honoring all the Jewish students who had attended the school before 1938 and were forced to leave by the Nazi regime. The school, which was founded in 1531, also designed a plaque as a permanent memorial. They researched the city archives to find the names and produced a document with short biographies of some of these former students. The document (in German) also shares how the school had a course about Judaism and Hebrew until the mid-1930s. Some familiar names in the document include Rudolf Aub, Fritz Bernheimer, and Walter Teutsch.

The full document can be found at <http://gym-anna.de/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/geschichtegedenkfeier.pdf>



Valuable Book Acquired by the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia

(adapted from information on the museum's website)

Thanks to a generous private donation, the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia has acquired what the museum has described as "a great document of Augsburg history" – a book printed by the Hebrew and Yiddish printer Chaim Schwarz in Augsburg around 1540. The book, "Arba'a Turim", is a halakhic codex written by Jakob ben Asher. The title translates as "four pillars" or "four rows". Accordingly, the book is divided into four parts that cover topics of great relevance to the Jewish communities of the Diaspora: Jewish holidays and prayers, Jewish dietary laws, Jewish marriage law, and Jewish civil and criminal law. It was an important basis for the later code of law called the Shulchan Aruch.

Chaim Schwarz's printing press produced the first Hebrew prints known in modern Germany. He lived and worked in Augsburg from around 1533 until approximately 1544. Some of the most important Hebrew and Yiddish printed books of the time were produced in Augsburg. Of particular note is the fact that he did all of this at a time when there was no Jewish life in Augsburg as Jews had been expelled from the city in 1438. Museum director Carmen Reichert says that this can be explained by Augsburg's history as a Reformation city. She notes that, "During the Reformation, people returned to biblical texts in the original languages, i.e., Hebrew and Greek. Therefore, Hebrew printing type was needed and a printer who could handle it."

Carmen Reichert brought the book back to Augsburg from Israel in April 2023. After the upcoming renovation of the synagogue building, it will become an essential part of the new permanent exhibition of the museum. ❧

Descendants Confront Fading Memories of the Holocaust

By Jeffrey L. Katz. Jeffrey is a retired journalist who lives in Bethesda, MD. He is the son of Margot Nathan and grandson of Else and Julius Fritz Landauer of Augsburg.

As descendants of Augsburg's Jewish community, we would like to think that learning about the Holocaust would promote tolerance and tamp down antisemitism.

But many of us aren't optimistic about that at all.

Nearly 80 years since the end of the Nazi regime, we still feel the pain of the horrors imposed on the Jewish people. This history could serve as a warning of what happens when there is unchecked nationalism, racial, or religious hatred, and the so-called "good" people become complicit through their silence. But that is not a message that resonates widely.

"From my rather fatalist point of view," wrote Dan Schumm of San Francisco, California, "there is no amount of education, relevance, meaning, or initiative that can be marshaled to alter the deep-seated antisemitism (and the so many hatreds of the 'other') inhabiting many a human soul." Fueling Schumm's pessimism are the "political leaders/would-be autocrats who use hatred of the other to fuel their followers' sense of grievance. We have a living example of this in our country right now."

Schumm's response was typical of those we received when we asked how meaningful you thought the Holocaust would be in the future. The question was posed – and answers received – before the Israel-Hamas war inflamed hatred of Jews.

"I think it is naïve to think that education will stymie antisemitism," said Richard Oppenheimer. "Jews have always been hated and will continue to be. Antisemitism in this country continues to exist, but may not have been as apparent recently until Trump became president, which encouraged all those filled with hate to realize it was acceptable to display it openly."

To be sure, Karin Haldeman of Ghent, New York, still saw a power in the history of the Holocaust "to remind us of our human vulnerability to fear, and out of fear, to demonize the 'other' — through the memorials we confront the human consequences of succumbing to fear. Genocide is rooted in fear, as is authoritarianism. We human beings long to be kept safe from the outside, although experience tells us we are most safe when we as individuals seize hold of our courage and act with humanity towards others."

Indeed, that's the sort of message that comes from visiting one of the many Holocaust memorials and new Jewish museums that have sprung up worldwide in recent years. There's renewed emphasis on educational curricula about the Shoah, especially in Germany. And there have been successful efforts to restore synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in Europe, Augsburg is very

much among them. Yet none of these initiatives have stymied an alarming rise in antisemitism, religious bigotry, and hate crimes. Nor have they prevented genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, and Burma/Myanmar.

"I think the Holocaust will always be relevant to Jews, even when the survivors are all gone," said Julia Rymer Brucker of Littleton, Colorado. "For those Jews like myself who continue to identify with and practice Judaism, the Holocaust was and remains a seminal event in the history of the Jewish people, affecting our communities to this day, even as the survivors among us pass away. It is part of the stories told in synagogues and it looms large in our memories."

But, Brucker added, "For those who no longer identify with their Jewish heritage, I don't see it as a big issue anymore, but more of an abstraction."

One of the problems, she said, is that the Holocaust has become "the de-facto comparison for invasive government acts of any kind or for nearly any kind of prejudice. It has gotten completely out of hand recently, with people on the left and the right, particularly here in the United States, constantly comparing things like COVID restrictions or immigration enforcement to the Holocaust. At a certain point, the Holocaust becomes meaningless."

Dan Goldberg of El Cerrito, California, lamented the increasing number of people and governments that "refuse to accept the reality of history. In the United States, there are places where the slavery of people kidnapped from Africa and their descendants is not taught."

Goldberg expects the impact of the Holocaust to fade with successive generations. It affected him so much, even after his parents and grandparents died, that he needed to literally let go of some of what they left behind. "I inherited more than 100 pounds of albums and business papers," he said. "It was very upsetting to learn what they endured prior to coming to the United States. The knowledge haunted me. Ultimately, I donated the family archives to the Jewish Museum Berlin to get them out of my immediate life."

Hillary Keegin of Angers, France, noted that her family sought years ago to disconnect somewhat from the past. "I am Walter Landor's grand-daughter (Fritz Landauer's great-granddaughter)," she began. "As you can see — already there was a distance put between my family and both the Holocaust and Germany, in my grandfather's choice to anglicize his name."

She recalled a recent visit with a friend named Stephanie to the store at the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia. Her friend wanted to buy a best-selling French comic series for children called *Les Enfants de la Résistance* or *Children of the Resistance*. "I said no," Keegin said. "That she and I had already carried enough of the heavy story that was my family's (Jewish) and hers." (Stephanie's German grandfather was required to



Frank Schilling guiding school children through the JMAS permanent exhibit ©JMAS_Franz Kimmel



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! Please send it to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com. Thank you!

Cousins Connection

By Anne Regenstein, who resides in San Francisco, California, is the granddaughter of Ludwig and Lisl (née Nathan) Regensteiner who were born and raised in Augsburg.

The sound of the Shofar filled the old Munich square as I stood in silence with my German relatives and others who were welcoming the Jewish New Year. I thought of how often my family had heard this sound in Munich and Augsburg before the catastrophe of the Nazis. The sound and place connected me to my German Jewish heritage. But a more profound feeling was the deep and warm connection I felt to my German cousins.

My parents and grandparents fled Nazi Germany in 1938. As a first-generation U.S. citizen growing up in suburban Rhode Island, I always felt different. There were very few Jews in our suburban town and none of my peers were first generation. My elders were proud of being German and enjoyed the music, literature, food, and language of their birth.

In my teens and as a young adult, I pondered my family's connection to a country that had betrayed them and murdered so many friends and family. I studied German in high school and college and then studied and worked in Germany for three summers between 1979 and 1982. I was also lucky that my paternal grandparents who came from Augsburg wrote about their life in Germany.

In 2011, my husband and I planned our first family trip to Europe. Other cousins had re-established ties with our third cousins in Augsburg and Munich, so I followed their lead. One of our cousins, Michael Bernheim, welcomed us to his home, gave us a great tour of Augsburg, including the synagogue and the cemetery where I saw the graves of my paternal great grandparents, and the Eiskanal where my husband had trained in kayak slalom racing. Coincidentally, I discovered that Michael and Susanne, his wife, live on the same block where my grandfather grew up. Susanne cooked a delicious and nostalgic meal of veal goulash, *Spaetzle*, and *Rote Grütze*. The Bernheim's attentive listening, curiosity, kindness, and thoughtfulness laid the basis for our ongoing ties (the food helped, too).

In the coming years, both Michael and I worked to get memorials for our relatives who were victims of the Holocaust: my maternal great grandparents, Rudolph and Lena (née Bernheim) Nathan; and Michael's great grandmother, Maria Bernheim and her grandson, Wolfgang Bernheim. On the morning of May 18, 2018, my



Bernheim and Nathan cousins (L-R) Fritz Bernheim, Kurt Bernheim, Alfred Bernheim, Gertrud Nathan (née Bloch) and Lisl Regensteiner (née Nathan) 1911

family was present for a *Stolpersteine* installation in Frankfurt and then we traveled to Augsburg for the memorials there later that day. It was a very emotional day filled with sadness, but also a tremendous feeling of connection to my extended German family, including more third cousins (Christoph Bernheim and Eva Bernheim-Geisperger) and their children and grandchildren. Their warmth and meaningful conversations provided solace. Our reunion continued with more activities in Munich, including seeing one of my grand-parent's former apartments.

My husband and I returned to Germany in September this year for another wonderful family visit in Berlin and Munich. I have tremendous gratitude that my connection to my extended family thrives despite the distance. I hope that our children will continue to enjoy this connection.



(L-R) Micheal Bernheim, Anne Regenstein, Eva Bernheim-Geisperger and Christoph Bernheim 2023

Israel and Augsburg Connection is Amazing Miracle

By Deborah Sturm Rausch lives in Upstate New York and is the daughter of Walter Sturm and the Heilbronner/Steinfeld family.

Immediately following October 7, I started searching for things to do to help. Of course, we donated to nonprofit organizations located in Israel, but I wanted to do more. Consumed with what's happening there, I explored online, including on social media pages, for something, anything, where I could be useful. Thanks to some information from my daughter, my search led me to the Israeli American Council of Boston. At the time they were collecting items to be shipped to Israel to help with the war effort. I immediately volunteered.

I noticed that they needed some suitcases, so I packed my car full of rolling bags and headed to the Massachusetts Turnpike. Three hours later I arrived at their offices to drop them off. One thing lead to another and I was invited upstairs to meet the leadership team responsible for the organization and logistics of the effort.

While I was being introduced to some people, we heard a woman's voice from our left. Everyone turned to listen to the important information she was conveying, including me. The moment that our eyes met, we each let out a shriek! The woman was Talia Keren, an Augsburg descendant



(L-R) Debbie Rausch and Tali Keren, eyes swollen from tears of joy at their chance encounter in Boston, Massachusetts in October, 2023.

Meet-Ups continues on Page 14

of the Einstein family whom I had met six years earlier at the 100th Anniversary of the synagogue! Tali, her mother Louise Lipschitz, and I have stayed in touch, and have gotten together on occasion - especially when Louise is visiting from Israel - but for some reason the thought never entered our minds that we could help one another during this crisis!

We instantly fell into each other's arms - hugging, sobbing, and in disbelief! It was amazing! We hugged for a very long time. It was so emotional, and just what we both needed. Someone in the flesh who cared... someone with whom we felt connected... someone. We just couldn't believe we were both standing there, together. It was an unbelievable experience and one I will never forget!

A few months later, Diane Castiglione, another descendant of the Einstein family and a cousin of Tali's, visited Boston, and the three of us met for lunch.

The power of Augsburg's Jewish community of descendants is strong! Indeed, we are like extended family! ❧



(L-R) Diane Castiglione, Debbie Rausch, and Talia Keren, Wellesley, Massachusetts, 2023.

join the military during World War II.) "Let's let our kids make their way as unencumbered as possible by the heavy roles our ancestors had to play out nearly 100 years ago."

Several respondents offered suggestions of what could be done to at least try to keep alive memories of the Holocaust. Rosemary Mark of Walnut Creek, California, said it was important to keep that history current, "such as sharing in book groups with people who do not have family background as we do." But Mark acknowledged the limitations, writing, "Not sure what else I can add. Even world leaders are stymied."

"Probably the most important element," wrote Michael Bernheim of Augsburg, "is to make the young generations aware of what happened, aware that it is not history in the sense that it is gone, but that its implications are still and will be within us all, in one way or another."

Richard M. Landman of New York City said he had written a book about his family's experiences during the Holocaust, started a website, returned a Torah to Germany, and donated artifacts to museums. And he continues to speak and preach tolerance, "being a gay son of two German Jewish refugees."

Peter A. Kraus of Dallas, Texas, serves on the board of the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, which educates broadly about the importance of human rights. Kraus' efforts were cited in an award presented to him last year by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Besides serving on the museum board, Kraus' acceptance speech mentioned his support for the ADL and his involvement in one lawsuit that made it easier to register to vote in Texas and another against the leader of an anti-Muslim hate group.

Meanwhile, the challenges of using the Holocaust as an historical reference point are becoming more apparent. Brucker worried that it's already counterproductive because it's "to the detriment of celebrating our culture and traditions . . . And we don't educate non-Jews about our traditions because we barely educate ourselves." It would be much better, she said, "that a celebrity who publicly spouts right-wing, antisemitic drivel is asked to attend a Shabbat dinner, visit a synagogue, or attend a Purim carnival instead of visiting a Holocaust museum." ❧

Bibliography from Ask the Historian, continued from Page 10

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4. Benigna Schönhagen: *Das Jüdische Kulturmuseum Augsburg-Schwaben 2006-2018, Lindenberg im Allgäu 2018*.

Recipe Corner

Berches

By Bettina Kaplan of Oakland, California. She is the granddaughter of Ellen Feldberg (née Arnold), a member of the Arnold and Landauer families.

Our recipe for this issue came to us in a very roundabout way. This past summer, the DJCA was contacted by Alberto Dorfzaun of Ecuador who heard about our group from Jeffrey Katz, a fellow Augsburg descendant. Alberto's family was originally from the Swabian village of Fischach, not far from Augsburg. They emigrated to Cali, Colombia, where his grandparents, Moritz and Babette Dorfzaun, went into business with Jeffrey's grandparents, Julius Fritz and Else Landauer, who had emigrated to Cali in the late 1930s.

Fischach may sound familiar to some of you as some of your relatives may have been from there as well. But also, during the 2017 descendants' reunion, some of us visited Fischach and left the town hall with a souvenir bag filled with a freshly baked *Berches* (German Jewish Challah). I mentioned my memories of Fischach to Alberto and he immediately sent a photo of a pair of the *Berches* that he bakes weekly using his grandmother's original recipe. They were so beautiful that I was surprised they were homemade! What a lovely tradition to remember his family's past!

After seeing Alberto's *Berches*, I immediately thought of Rosemary Mark, a friend and fellow descendant who is an experienced and passionate bread baker. She was unfamiliar with *Berches* and agreed to bake it. The next time I visited Rosemary, she shared some of her *Berches* with me. After one bite, delicious memories of our visit to Fischach came flooding back!

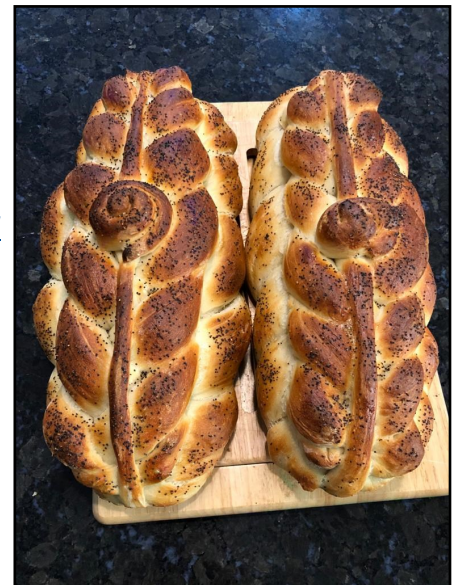
According to Sonya Gropman, co-author of the book *The German-Jewish Cookbook: Recipes and History of a Cuisine*, *Berches* is the southern German name for the ceremonial bread that was eaten by the Jews of Germany for the weekly Sabbath and for holidays. It differs from the challah most of us are familiar with in two ways: 1) it is a "water bread" that does not contain eggs in the dough and 2) it contains mashed potato in the dough, which gives it a slightly tangy taste, similar to sourdough bread. Following tradition, this bread is braided and sprinkled with poppy seeds.*

The next time you would like to bake something as a nod to our Swabian Jewish roots, why not try making a loaf or two of *Berches*? A recipe can be found at <https://tastecooking.com/recipes/berches/>. ❀

*Source: *The German-Jewish Cookbook: Recipes and History of a Cuisine*, Brandeis University Press, 2017, Page 93



Above: Alberto Dorfzaun with his weekly *Berches*.
Below: *Berches* fresh from the oven.



NEXT issue

Coming in June 2024... The theme for our next issue is:

Our Culinary Heritage



The theme of the June 2024 issue of **Connections** is **our culinary heritage**. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on and share stories about how some foods connect you to your Augsburg family and history!

Food is a cultural and familial link, reflecting our heritage through recipes often passed down for generations. It gives us a flavor of who we are as individuals and as a people. The recipes and rituals associated with family meals often provide a sense of comfort, connecting us to our roots and shared experiences. Food triggers stories of perseverance, resilience, hard times, and good times. They provide insight to where we've been and to how we celebrate, love, and endure. And, they connect the younger generations to times and traditions gone by.

Now more than ever we look to these stories with pride to guide and support us. We look forward to hearing your stories about favorite family meals, relatives who were amazing cooks (or not!), lessons learned while in the kitchen or dining room, and foods that take you back to a certain time and place - - whether it was you or your ancestors that were there.

Please submit your photo and description, and any other articles, to us at djcaugsburg@gmail.com no later than **April 15, 2024**.

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 June 2023 issue, and are pleased to post a few of your responses below.

Thanks so much for this edition. It's amazing!! So much information and so much work has gone into this. It's fantastic reading. Time for us to re- visit! Congratulations and heartfelt thanks.

Best wishes,
Stephen Spiro, England

~

*Our lives are complete!
Instead of arguing with each other at the breakfast table today, our heads are buried in the latest edition of **Connections** - so we cancelled our appointment with our marriage counsellor.*

*Thanks again for your latest masterpiece! 5 years and still going strong - that of course refers to both us and **Connections**!*

Love,
Steven and Hilary Anson, Glasgow, Scotland

~

Wow, what a piece of journalism; you have certainly undertaken a HUGH responsibility. I can certainly see the energy and heartfelt feelings that each article captures and sends to your audience.

Myron Holtz, New York

It is a brilliant issue and congratulations are once again in order. Its length is warranted on account of its being a fifth anniversary.

I am most particularly grateful for the link to the marvelous video that I had never before seen. (I happened to see it just the day after an interesting email exchange with Benigna.)

George Sturm, Englewood, NJ

~

Greetings and thanks for this wonderful edition. May I ask how it came to pass that select Augsburgers chose to honor with their placards the memory of my grandparents? This is extremely gratifying. Any other info would be appreciated. Cheers.

Jeffrey P. Englander, Great Neck, New York

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. ✂