

CONNECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AUGSBURG



December 2025

Volume 8, Number 2

Destination Augsburg: April 19 - 23, 2026

The 2026 Reunion of the Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg (DJCA) hosted by Jewish Museum of Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) is around the corner on April 19 - 23, and we couldn't be more excited!

As of December, there are more than 80 people registered to attend! Hailing from nine countries: Australia, England, France, Germany, New Zealand, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States, and representing three generations of descendants with one survivor expected as well, this reunion is sure to be inspiring and meaningful for everyone.

There are interesting sessions planned, and the committee has built time into the schedule for attendees to connect with and learn more about each other. **Details will be finalized soon and provided to registrants** but highlights include:

- ⇒ **Sunday, April 19:** Attendees will be arriving throughout the day. We will check in and get together as a group that evening.
- ⇒ **Monday, April 20:** Parallel visits to the Jewish Museum in either Augsburg or Kriegshaber followed by cemetery visits in those respective communities. The day will be capped by a special reception hosted by Augsburg Mayor Eva Weber.
- ⇒ **Tuesday, April 21:** Guided tours of Augsburg featuring historic Augsburg, Jewish history, resistance against National Socialism and UNESCO world heritage sites, followed by an evening concert by fellow descendant Cantor Assaf Levitin.
- ⇒ **Wednesday, April 22:** Guided tours (as above) and a possible excursion to Ichenhausen for those who wish to visit there. A session for a few descendant families to dialogue with a few Augsburg high school students will also take place (stay tuned for more information on that).
- ⇒ **Thursday, April 23:** There will be a wrap-up session followed by a closing luncheon.

Still thinking about attending? While there is still time to register for the reunion, the JMAS committee hopes to finalize registration soon so final arrangements can be made with local restaurants, tour leaders, etc. In January, registrants will be provided with a more detailed schedule of events and will be asked to sign up for individual activities. You can register at: <https://forms.gle/6yhZajwJ4agngCEw5>.

As you'll read in this issue of **Connections**, the

museum will be closing for renovations at the end of 2026. The new permanent exhibition is not expected to open until 2030. As a result, the reunion represents a fantastic opportunity to visit the museum prior to its lengthy closure. We hope you'll take advantage of it

We at DJCA are extremely grateful to Carmen Reichert and Sarah Schwab of the JMAS and to our local fellow descendant Michael Bernheim for their dedication and hard work in putting together this extraordinary reunion for us. It is an honor and pleasure for us to work with them.

For any questions regarding the reunion, including information about the hotels that have set aside a block of rooms for attendees, please contact Sarah Schwab: sarah.schwab@jmaugsburg.de.

We look forward to seeing you in April! ✨



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CONNECTIONS, THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCENDANTS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AUGSBURG (DJCA)

is published by the DJCA, a
United States-based association
founded in 2018.

Our purpose is to:

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

SUBMISSIONS:

CONNECTIONS is published
bi-annually in June and December.
Articles, family news, family
recipes and Food for Thought
ideas are welcome. **Please send all
your submissions to the editor at
djcaugsburg@gmail.com.**

DEADLINES:

June Issue - April 15

December Issue - October 15

*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/juedischesmuseumaugsburg/>).

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A Message from our Co-Chairpersons

Written by Bettina Kaplan

As another year draws to a close, we pause to reflect on the passage of time - on what we have lost, what we have learned, and what we carry forward. For the Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg, this reflection holds special meaning. We honor the memory of those who came before us, and we commit to keeping their stories alive, ensuring that their legacy continues to illuminate our lives.

In April 2026, we will gather once again in Augsburg for our reunion. Nearly a decade will have passed since the last reunion in 2017, when 99 descendants came together to share family histories, walk familiar streets, and connect across generations. That gathering lit a flame of remembrance and community. In 2026, we will kindle that flame anew, reminding us that memory is not only about the past. It is also a light we carry forward, one that brightens the present and guides the future.

This season, as many celebrate festivals of light, we are reminded that even in times of darkness, a small flame can endure and grow. Each story shared, each article contributed, and each memory passed on is part of that light - a collective brightness that ensures Augsburg's Jewish community is remembered not as a chapter closed, but as a legacy alive within us.

As we enter a new year, may we carry both gratitude and hope: gratitude for the generations who came before us, and hope for the connections that will deepen when we gather in Augsburg in 2026. Until then, may this newsletter remind us that, together, we are keepers of memory and bearers of light. ☸



L-R: Diane Castiglione and Bettina Kaplan

From the Editor

Deborah Sturm Rausch

As I write this, it is Hanukkah, and just days since the massacre at Bondi Beach near Sydney, Australia. May the memories of all the victims, from 87-year-old Holocaust survivor Alex Kleytman to 10-year-old girl Matilda Bea Britvan, be forever a blessing.

I, like most of us, am heartsick over what happened there and the antisemitism that is happening all over the world. It seems that nearly every week we confront another attack against someone who is Jewish - just because that someone is Jewish.

While antisemitism is rampant and the history of hate against the Jewish people seems to be repeating itself, I continue to hope that the world will wake up and see the light. The light of the holidays... the light of the new year... the light of generations remembered and generations to come... the light of hope.

You will read and feel that hope in many of the articles in this issue of **Connections**. This issue includes moving and informative stories that are sure to interest you. The Theme articles are particularly compelling to me. Check out the Family Spotlight articles and, especially connected to the upcoming reunion, think about something that relates to your family that you might be able to share. We are also hoping to receive some new recipes, as our readers always look forward to them. If you've tried one of the recipes we have shared, please let us know how the food turned out. And don't forget to tell us about your "meet-ups" aside from the reunion.

It is indeed because of all that is happening in the world - the antisemitism and the terror groups that continue to grow - *and* because of all that has happened to our families and friends in the past because of their Judaism, that our descendants group is even more meaningful to me, and our upcoming reunion is even more important.

I am honored to be part of this group, and very grateful that our descendant *connections* are so strong. It is truly a privilege to work with our counterparts in Augsburg and to be in touch with all of you.

Happy New Year. May we all be blessed with health, happiness, prosperity, safety, and peace in 2026.

I look forward to seeing you in Augsburg. ☸



Deborah Sturm Rausch

Letter from JMAS Director Carmen Reichert

Dear Descendants,

After the challenging years we have all experienced, we remain hopeful. The return of all the surviving hostages was a miracle that many had feared would never happen. For the first time in a long while, we felt a sense of cautious relief. We hope the new year will bring more positive news.



Carmen Reichert, Director

Here is some uplifting news from Augsburg:

We recently celebrated our 40th anniversary with around 250 guests, including representatives from politics, business, and civil society. In our foyer, a special anniversary exhibition now highlights the key moments and achievements of the past four decades, including our work with the descendants community. We are deeply grateful for the warm congratulations we received, the encouraging words, and the coverage in local and national media.

In 2025, our “*Lebenslinien*” (“Life Lines”) series, originally introduced by Benigna Schönhagen, was dedicated to a very special topic: *Fritz Levy and the last Jewish children he taught in the synagogue until 1939*. We were honored that Fritz Levy’s son, Frank Tuteur, joined us at this event and presented us with the photo album that Fritz Levy received. We also welcomed Frank’s relative, Gidon Lev, who has researched the album’s history and shared his findings with us. *(Please see his article on page 15.)*

Looking ahead, some challenges will present themselves for the museum. At the end of 2026, we will close our current permanent exhibition. All objects will be temporarily moved to a newly built storage facility in Oberschönenfeld where they will be kept until the opening of the new permanent exhibition, currently planned for 2030. For our team, this means preparing for a transition period during which time the Halderstrasse location will be closed. Thus, our activities will take place primarily in Kriegshaber and at other offsite locations. Our educational programs will be redesigned during the transition. We have already begun the curatorial planning for the new permanent exhibition.

We have begun fundraising for the new permanent exhibition. The total budget for this project is approximately two million euros. We hope to secure around three quarters of this through public funding, while the remaining funds must be raised through private donations. Alongside our curators, I am actively working with public and private funders and sponsors to secure resources for the new exhibition, the new storage facility, the museum shop, and the new temporary exhibition space that will be built behind the synagogue. We would therefore be very grateful for any support you may wish to offer. Your contributions help us ensure that the history, stories, and legacy we share will continue to be preserved and presented for future generations. We feel confident in our ability to meet these challenges successfully. For more information visit <https://jmaugsburg.de/en/involvement/support/donations/>

Most importantly, we are very much looking forward to the descendants reunion this April - to reuniting with familiar faces and meeting new families from the wider descendants community, and sharing more about our plans for the future. We hope this gathering will be not only an opportunity to celebrate our shared history but also a moment to connect, reflect, and feel inspired by one another’s stories.

With warm regards,
Carmen Reichert

MEET THE STAFF

Meet Annika Ramsaier

By Michael Bernheim, who lives in Augsburg.



Annika Ramsaier with the “Museum on the Road” on tour in Augsburg © JMAS

Introduction:

My name is Annika Ramsaier. I was born and raised in the Stuttgart region. I studied cultural anthropology and art history in Tübingen, Munich, and Tel Aviv. My first internship happened to be at the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia in 2015. I have been at the JMAS since 2023.

What is your role at the museum?

My job title is “Press and Public Relations Officer.” I answer press inquiries, write press releases, and compose flyers and program booklets (in cooperation with Sarah Schwab, who is responsible for the content). Additionally, I take care of the museum’s social media presence and website.

What do you like best about your work?

The variety of tasks and the multitude of contacts, internally and externally, e.g. establishing and maintaining a good working relationship with the press. In addition, my job gives me insight into many of the museum’s projects and thus allows me to learn in many different areas.

How did you get interested in German Jewish history?

Following a holiday trip to Israel with my parents, I decided to do a volunteer year in Israel after graduating from high school. I lived in Petah Tikva and learned to write on the job, working with handicapped children. Since then, I have been to Israel several times for internships and research projects. During my studies, my focus was on Jewish and Israel Studies.

What do you feel is the most important aspect of the work being done by the Museum and Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg (DJCA)?

The museum’s mission is to make Jewish history visible and to show that Jewish life has always belonged to the region. The DJCA network demonstrates that this life is continuing.

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

I like being out in nature, hiking, going to museums, dancing Lindy Hop (learned it in Israel).

Favorite food?

A dish from my grandmother who grew up in Romania: Strudel with potatoes and goulash.

Favorite travel destination?

The region of Brittany in France

What superpower would you like to have?

Being able to speak foreign languages instantly. ☸



Women of Legacy: Honoring the Female Voices of Augsburg's Jewish Past

This issue's theme is: **Women of Legacy: Honoring the Female Voices of Augsburg's Jewish Past.**

We turn our hearts and minds to the women whose presence shaped our families and our shared history. Often unsung but never forgotten, the Jewish women of Augsburg - our mothers, grandmothers, and aunts - played vital roles in nurturing community, sustaining tradition, and navigating the challenges of their times. Through these articles you will get a fuller picture of Jewish life in Augsburg as seen through the lives of the women who lived it.

The Women I Knew

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

All the women I knew as a child in Augsburg in the 1930s were "upper middle class." That meant that they held no jobs other than the management of their homes.

Here, for example, is my mother Anna Steinfeld Sturm's typical day:

Toward the end of breakfast leisurely enjoyed in the dining room, she summoned the cook, Fanny Grahammer, to the breakfast table to plan meals for the rest of the day. A little later in the morning, she and I would go to the central market, to acquire the fixings for the main meal at midday as well as the light supper in the evening. Marketing with mom was a highlight of my day because I would usually get a slice of cervelat, my favorite cold cut, or a handful of sauerkraut fresh from the barrel.

The meal's actual preparation was, of course, done by the cook who also served the family at the table. After lunch (that was actually dinner), my dad would have his midday siesta. Mom and I would play a game or she would sing folk songs, accompanying herself on the guitar or piano, or we would pay a short visit to my grandparents, the Steinfelds, who lived on the floor below us.

When my dad would go downstairs for his afternoon work in the shop, I was remanded to the care of one of the servants while mom and her twin sister, Hedwig Engländer, often with another friend or two, would go to one of the many *Kaffee-Konditoreien* for lots of chatter over coffee and pastries.



(L-R) Anna Sturm and Hedwig Engländer enjoying coffee and pastries together in Augsburg.



(L-R) Anna Steinfeld Sturm and Hedwig Steinfeld Engländer

After supper, there would be theater or movies or opera or togetherness with friends while the servants would do the honors of getting me ready for bed.

I suppose there were also women who held real jobs, but I didn't know any. In fact, it was not until I stood in awe of my friend Bob Auerbach's mother in Inwood, New York that I met a woman who worked outside of the house. This remarkable Jewish woman had already been a practicing attorney in Berlin in the 1920s and she was the most self-confident independent woman I knew at the time.

Minna Gruenebaum Wolf (1889-1943) and the Landmann Women

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

Henry Landman's aunt was a strong woman who had to handle life mostly by herself. Minna (Gruenebaum) Wolf was born in Hellstein, but when her husband Gustav died while she was pregnant, she moved to Augsburg around 1921 to live with her sister and Henry's mother, Regina Gruenebaum Landmann. When Auguste (Anne) was born, she was like a third sister to Henry. In fact, Auguste, also known as Guste, shared a bedroom with his sisters Irma and Joan. All was going well and Minna Wolf opened her own shoe store, later moving her business into the same space as that of her brother-in-law



Minna Wolf and her daughter Guste (Anne)

Theme articles continue on Page 5

Josef Landmann at Ravensburgerstraße 41. But when Henry and his father Josef were sent to Dachau after Kristallnacht, everything changed.

America gave Josef a visa to the United States, but it extended only to his wife and children. The Landmann women had to mostly handle life by themselves from Kristallnacht until they left for America in the summer of 1939.

Minna and Guste were also excluded from the visa. Minna turned Guste over to the Kindertransport program and she fled to London. After the war, Guste would once again join the Landmanns in Washington Heights in New York City and live with them until she married Eric Weil of Mannheim and had her own daughter, Susan.

After Regina, Joan, and Irma left to join Josef in New York City, Minna was totally alone. The apartment was taken over and she was forced to move to a *Judenhaus*. According to the records, by 1941 she was a slave laborer in what they translate as the balloon factory. But these were not children's toys; they were weather balloons or blimps. She was then deported with the rest of Augsburg's Jews to Auschwitz and was killed there in March 1943. She had left a suitcase with Mr. Hans, their business' landlord, and Henry learned about it when he entered Augsburg as a U.S. soldier in 1945. Mrs. Hans later gave it to my mother's father when he visited Augsburg after the war. It was full of photos and letters that she wrote to Anne (Guste) but couldn't mail to her. I have had many strong and courageous women in my family.

They Were Augsburg Women

By Angela Bachmair, Augsburg Remembrance Workshop (EWA)

I would like to introduce you to some Augsburg women - Jewish women of the early 20th century: entrepreneurs, artists, and family women. They were once part of Augsburg's urban society, but after 1933, they were excluded, persecuted, and ultimately murdered.

Their stories, preserved in the *Augsburg Memorial Book* (www.gedenkbuch-augsburg.de), reflect both the diversity of Jewish women's lives in pre-war Augsburg and the challenges of remembering them today. Women suffered the same persecution as men - forced labor, deportation, murder - yet they are far less visible in memory. The patriarchal society of their time confined them largely to the domestic sphere, leaving behind fewer records, photographs, and testimonies. This

scarcity of sources continues to shape our culture of remembrance.

Still, we ask: How did these women live? What were their dreams, fears, and small joys? Much must be reconstructed through empathy and imagination.

Women Devoted to Family Life

The paucity of information is particularly evident in the case of the women who worked in the home and appeared in public only alongside their husbands - if at all. Here are some of their stories.

Jenny Zebrak came to Augsburg from Poland at age 32 to marry Josef Zebrak, prayer leader of the Kriegshaber Synagogue. She became mother to his three sons and gave birth to four more children. Neighbors remembered a kind, close-knit family who were also poor. Josef's life is well documented; Jenny's is almost entirely lost. Two sons, Moritz and Ludwig, managed to reach Palestine, but Jenny and her daughters Hedwig, Paula, and Rosa were deported to Piaski in 1942. Beyond these bare facts, little is known.

Clara Cramer, born in Augsburg in 1886, was wife to Martin Cramer and mother to Erwin and Ernst. After her husband's tobacco business failed in the Great Depression, she took in lodgers to support the family. Her surviving son, Ernst Cramer, later a journalist, described her as a frugal woman, helpful to the point of self-sacrifice, who loved socializing and music and dancing. Clara was deported and murdered in the Holocaust.



Martin and Clara Cramer 1936

Cilli Hermann, wife of Josef and mother of Margot and Trude, kept a kosher household and enjoyed an active social life within both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Although she and her husband registered their daughters for a Kindertransport to England, they could not part with them; the whole family was ultimately deported to Piaski in 1942. Her story is known thanks to historian Benigna Schönhagen and family witnesses who reconstructed a vivid portrait of her warmth and cosmopolitan spirit.

Women in Business

Augsburg also had numerous Jewish businesswomen: the Bollack sisters, who ran a kosher restaurant at Königsplatz; banker Ida Bingen; sales representative Rosalie Brader; wool manufacturer and restaurateur Lina Zinner; furniture dealer Fanny Mändle; shoe seller Minna Wolf; and wine merchant Meta Gumperz.

Meta Gumperz, born in 1889 in Fischach, married Bernhard Gumperz from Kriegshaber and later ran his wine and spirits agency alone after his early death. She also opened a coffee and tea shop, but Nazi boycotts and laws drove her out of business. Forced into a ghetto house and laboring in the balloon factory, she witnessed her relatives' deportations before being sent to Auschwitz in 1943.

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Women in the Arts

Marianne Weil (1922–1943)

studied at the Augsburg School of Applied Arts and was known for her talent and seriousness. Expelled after antisemitic attacks, she was forced to labor with her mother and sister in the balloon factory before deportation to Auschwitz. Her brother Alfred (Arie), sent to Palestine in 1939, survived. When I met him in Israel decades later, he recalled his mother's words: "At least one of us should get out." I imagine how painful it must have been for Marianne, her sisters, and mother to say farewell to him.



Marianne Weil

Dinah Marx (née Strauss, 1900–1941) was born in Binswangen and moved with her family to Augsburg in 1913, where she attended the Maria Theresia Gymnasium and later studied singing at the Conservatory. Music was her passion; she likely performed in student and house concerts. She married merchant Leo Marx in 1929, and later moved to Munich with him and their two sons. After her husband was imprisoned and dispossessed, he was able to emigrate. She then tried to emigrate but was unsuccessful. In 1941, Dinah and her two young boys were deported to Kaunas, Lithuania, and murdered.



Remembering Their Lives

The Augsburg Memorial Book preserves the memory of these and many other women — most often through dates and official records rather than through letters or personal accounts because, as noted earlier, there is far less information about them than about the men. The stories are therefore those of persecution. Yet the memory of the women among the Nazi victims should be the same as that of the men. The stories should also capture the moments of life that preceded it: family gatherings, friendships, artistic work, and the small pleasures of daily existence.

These women were more than victims; they were citizens of Augsburg - businesswomen, artists, and mothers - whose lives enriched the city before they were destroyed. Remembering them fully means restoring not only the tragedy of their deaths but also the humanity of their lives.

Augsburg's Only Auschwitz Survivor - Irma Lichtenauer

By Alfred Hausmann, Board Member, Augsburg Remembrance Workshop (EWA) (English translation by Michael Bernheim)

Among the approximately 8,000 Auschwitz survivors, there was only one from Augsburg. I became aware of her when I investigated the history of Augsburg's *Judenhäuser* (buildings that the Nazi regime forced Jewish people to live in during the Holocaust) at 14 Hallstrasse and 5½ Mozartstrasse. At the Mozartstrasse address, Irma Lichtenauer lived together with her husband Julius for five weeks before her deportation. Her brother-in-law, his wife, and their daughter stayed at the Hallstrasse address before they were deported to Theresienstadt.



Irma Lichtenauer

Until January 1939, the Lichtenauer brothers, Sigmund and Julius, successfully ran a wholesale shoe store at 8 Kaiserplatz, now Theodor Heuss-Platz. At the time, my grandparents lived nearby and my grandfather obviously knew the Lichtenauer family. Years ago, I remember my uncle saying that my grandfather had told him: "Today I met the shoe merchant from Kaiserplatz and I wanted to talk to him, but he said, 'Herr Hausmann, you had better move on, it is not good for you, if they see you talking to me.'"

Both Lichtenauer brothers had come to Augsburg from Brunnau in the Lower Franconia district. Sigmund arrived in 1901 and he purchased a wholesale shoe store three years later. His brother Julius followed in 1913 and became his brother's partner in 1920. He lived at 45 Kaiserstrasse (now Konrad Adenauer-Allee) as a tenant of Frieda Reiter. There, he met Irma Hummel, his landlady's cousin. They married on December 11, 1941.

Born in Buttenwiesen in 1903, Irma moved with her parents to Kriegshaber, her mother's hometown, in 1915. After attending the Maria Theresia High School, Irma worked as a secretary, including in the office of the Augsburg Jewish community.

The community archives contain insightful documents about her life. Its manager, Herr Shavkit, compiled them for me and I gratefully acknowledge his help.

In January 1939, the Lichtenauer brothers were forced to sell their flourishing business. One of their employees took it over, together with two partners. In May 1942, Irma and Julius were evicted from their apartment and moved for ten months to the ghetto house (*Judenhaus*) at 6 Halderstrasse (within the synagogue building) and then for five weeks to another on Mozartstrasse. They were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau with the large March 1943 transport.

Upon arrival, Irma and Julius were separated. "Since then, I have not seen my husband again," Irma later reported. Also her brother-in-law, his wife, and their daughter were murdered in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, respectively.

Theme articles continue on Page 9



The **Family Spotlight** is a regularly featured column in **Connections**. This is a place where readers can get to know a bit about your family, its history, or 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. Thank you.

Three Generations Visit Augsburg - 2025

By Betsy Teutsch, daughter-in-law of Eric and Hilda (née Wormser) Teutsch, who lives in Philadelphia, PA.

Before we had even gone on a date, David Teutsch - now my husband of more than 51 years - told me that his parents were both refugees who had grown up in Augsburg, Germany. His mother Hilda and her sister Elizabeth (Beth) left Augsburg with their parents, Hedwig and Alex Wormser, in late 1939 to join Hedwig's sister, Rosa Schwab, in Buffalo, NY. On the boat they met another Augsburger, Eric Teutsch, who boarded in Liverpool after waiting at the Kitchener Camp for an American visa.

Augsburg's Rabbi Ernst Jacob also made it to the United States and periodically sent mimeographed lists updating former fellow Augsburger Jews on one another's whereabouts. After arriving in the United States, Eric fondly remembered "the Wormser girl" from the boat and traveled from Salt Lake City, Utah, where he had joined his older brother Walter, to see her in Buffalo. In short, Hilda said yes, and they married in 1943.

Eric and Hilda, along with Beth Wormser Ozer, Ruth Teutsch Schwager, and cousins Lenore Marx and Gertrude Schwab, later returned as guests of the city of Augsburg for the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II and the rededication of the Augsburg synagogue. Aunt Ruth said she felt their murdered parents were sitting there with them.

In 1999, David and I took our son Zachary (then 16) and daughter Nomi (then 11) to Augsburg to see their grandparents' home. Eric and Hilda had surprisingly happy memories of their youth. Eric described how to find the family graves: "Go straight, turn at the wall, and there they are." But in a cemetery with more than 1,000 graves, we found none.

We did go to the beautiful Café Eickmann (now closed), where Eric's mother, Klara Holzinger Teutsch, met her friends for coffee and cake on Saturday afternoons. David went to the Rathaus, whose obliging staff shared copies of family records - documents that became useful decades later.

Walter Laqueur's *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* filled in many gaps, helped us understand my in-laws' early lives. As Nazi restrictions tightened, the Jewish community took on many roles once held by public institutions. The children were somewhat sheltered, and the camaraderie was powerful.

Fast forward 25 years. David, our children, and their children are now German citizens. Zach, and his wife Becca, with children Shula and Sender, named for David's grandfather Alexander Wormser, invited us to join them on a trip to Bavaria. We vacationed in Munich, Füssen, and Augsburg. We celebrated Sender's 7th birthday at Neuschwanstein Castle, wanting to experience the countryside that Eric and Hilda so vibrantly described.

This time, in preparing for visiting Augsburg, we found astonishing resources. Distant relatives had mapped generations of the Wormsers on *Geni.com* and Zach quickly found over a dozen ancestors buried in Augsburg. Googling a few names revealed a complete cemetery list. I quickly cross-referenced most everyone on the list. <https://www.alemannia-judaica.de/images/Images%20280/CEM-AUG-FAMILY-NAME-INDEX.htm>

I noticed that David's grandfather, Alexander

Wormser, was himself named for his grandfather, Alexander Rothschild - making our grandson's name, Sender, a link across four generations. By writing to the DJCA email address, we were lucky to be introduced to Michael Bernheim, who guided us to the cemetery and helped us find the graves using the two confusing numbering systems. He was a caring and knowledgeable guide. It was so meaningful to all of us to explore the history together. We located Nanette and Alexander Rothschild's impressive tombstone, along with many other ancestors'

headstones. After a long search, we found Hedwig's grandparents, Jeta and Emanuel Laemle's eroded Hebrew engraved tombstone - right besides the Rothschilds. Its location gave us chills: these two couples, unrelated in life, rest side by side, their descendants later joined through marriage and survival. As Becca said, "It's like time traveling."

Michael also arranged a wonderful visit to the Jewish museum, where the Educational Director, Frank Schillinger, greeted us with never before seen photos of Eric and Hilda and took us on a wonderful tour that included photos of Hilda and Beth's confirmation.

This was a magical day for us all. Seven generations linked. Alex and Hedwig's escape meant their lineage continued, with three new generations thriving in the United States.

We are so grateful.



Front (L-R) - Shulamit and Sender Rosen Teutsch, and Betsy Teutsch; Rear (L-R) - Zach and Rabbi David Teutsch Right grave: Nanette and Alexander Rothschild; Left grave: Jeta and Emanuel Laemle

Photo credit: Rebecca Rosen

Family Spotlight continues on Page 8

The Oppenheimer Family of Augsburg

By Richard Oppenheimer, who lives in Venice, Florida

My father Max and uncle Ernst lived in the Kriegshaber section of Augsburg at Schillerstrasse 10. Max was born in 1915 in Schrobenhausen and Ernst in 1919 in Augsburg. Max was born in nearby Schrobenhausen because he was an illegitimate child and his parents tried to be inconspicuous about the birth. David and Maria didn't marry until 1918. Complicating the matter, Maria was Catholic (although she converted to Judaism in 1920). Max and Ernst both became bar mitzvah in the Augsburg Halderstrasse synagogue, although the family attended services in the Kriegshaber synagogue.



(L-R) Max, Ernst, Maria and David Oppenheimer

Both Max and Ernst managed to emigrate to New York in 1940 but left their parents David and Maria in Augsburg. I grew up as an only child and my parents' lives in Germany were never discussed in front of me. I only learned of many of the details of their lives after their deaths when I found documents they had hidden in our home. My mother wrote a chronicle in 1945 about the four years she spent in concentration camps. My father left a bundle of letters written between 1947 and 1949 to him and Ernst from a gentile family still living in Augsburg after the war.

In these letters, I learned that my grandfather David died in Sachsenhausen. However, his ashes were sent to Maria and he was buried in the Augsburg Jewish cemetery on Haunstetterstrasse. My grandmother Maria was deported to Auschwitz where she perished.

Here are some excerpts from the letters translated into English.

"My dear Oppenheimers,

On behalf of my dear husband I should send you an extensive report. My dear husband is totally overworked and is exhausted at night, especially because of his accident. Your first dear letter was received 22.2.47 (February 22, 1947) and we were so happy to hear a sign of life from you two. We couldn't understand why you didn't contact us for such a long time since you both knew we were very close friends with both of your blessed parents until the bitter and painful end."

"...In the morning at 7:00 am, I was alone to say goodbye to your most loved mother. She was lying in my arms, full of tears with deepest sorrow. She said, dear Resele, I will not see my children again, tell them as soon as possible my last words and motherly blessing for both, may they never forget me and their beloved father, all sacrifices that we had made for our children were with love and deep belief for our religion." These were the last words of your dear Mother. I want to tell you that on that morning when I said goodbye to your dear Mother, I was all alone

there, nobody dared to go out because of precautions and fear of the Gestapo who surrounded the area."

"...Since today I gave an extensive report to you both, I would like to describe the funeral of your dear blessed father. The urn came to the funeral at the Jewish cemetery Haunstetterstr., also we were the closest again to your dear Mother, we went with your Mother in the middle, we both left and right behind the coffin. Very few Jews dared to give the last honor to the precious dead. The Gestapo were standing behind the grave stones and noted every single name, especially those of the Aryans. This didn't bother me because I also accompanied your Mother to the prison in Katzenstadel where your dear father stayed until he was forced into the concentration camp. Now my dears, may you prove to yourselves that between your parents and us a profound friendship existed. This is emphasized that in the summer 1946, we had the dirt cleaned off your blessed father's grave and put plants on the grave. No relatives from the Aryan side of the family visited the cemetery, to at least honor the dead with a few flowers."

"I say often that my soul is ruined and it is extremely difficult for me to write to you but it has to be. I have fulfilled your Mother's last wish and gave you, my dear Oppenheimer's, clarity. It is painful for you, but I also realize that my dear husband lost his siblings and relatives, in all 22 were victims of the Nazis. May we bow in deep sorrow of the dear dead."

These letters are among the few surviving testaments to my grandparents' final years in Augsburg and the friendship that endured between them and their gentile neighbors despite the terror surrounding them. They remind us not only of personal loss but also of the compassion that flickered, even in the darkest times, between people bound by shared humanity.



Above left: Schillerstrass 10 – The Oppenheimer home, circa 1944. The house was destroyed by a bomb during World War II.



Above right: Grave of David Oppenheimer. Maria's inscription was added by Max Oppenheimer in the 1970s. Jewish cemetery Haunstetterstrasse, Augsburg.

Family Spotlight continues on Page 9

Healing the Past: A Visit to Augsburg in October 2025

By Irene Reti, who lives in Capitola, California, and is the granddaughter of Max Bein, who was born in Augsburg. She is the author of several books, including 'City of Toys / City of the Reich and Keeper of Memory: A Memoir.'

My mother escaped from Germany in 1939. For her, it was a place best forgotten. In fact, she and my father (also a Holocaust refugee, from Hungary) tried to protect us by hiding their Jewish heritage.

I am devoted to researching my family. In 2000, my spouse, Lori, and I traveled to Nuremberg. My grandfather, Max Bein, had moved there from Augsburg after his father Sigmund's death in 1900. Later, Max became a partner in the famous Doll & Co steam toy factory. In 2022, I documented the Nuremberg chapter of my family in my book City of Toys/City of the Reich.

But what about before Nuremberg? What was my family's life like in Augsburg? I searched and found images of cathedrals and Bavarian sausages. Visiting Augsburg felt scary.

But then I discovered Descendants of the Jewish Community of Augsburg. My inquiry was answered by Bettina Kaplan, who referred me to fellow descendant Michael Bernheim and to Frank Schillinger of the Jewish Museum. Soon, Michael, Frank, and I planned an itinerary. I felt comforted knowing they would be our guides.

Now Michael, Frank, Lori, and I strode towards the Jewish cemetery. We felt at ease - guided through a post-Shoah city, layers of the past and present blending. As we neared the cemetery, Michael pointed out anti-fascist graffiti. Some of our conversation as we walked was about the resonance between politics in the United States and Germany today. As William Faulkner wrote: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Michael unlocked the gate. The trees were ablaze in autumnal glory. We stood before the graves of Sigmund Bein, my great-grandfather, and his brother, Alexander Bein. Together, after emigrating from Unsleben around 1876, the Bein Brothers ran a wholesale cheese business.

Frank told me that Sigmund died in the Neufriedenheim sanatorium in Munich. I was saddened to discover that Sigmund probably suffered from mental illness and considered how this impacted my grandfather, who was then sixteen. Exploring the past can raise more questions than answers.

We visit the World War I memorial, which includes Hugo Bein. As I knelt to touch Hugo's marker, I thought of all the soldiers who died. Michael told stories about other Jewish residents. He expressed both grief and pride as he talked intimately about his community. I had not realized there were only 1200 Jewish



Irene Reti at World War I Memorial - Hugo Bein, Haunstetterstrasse Jewish cemetery, Augsburg

residents in Augsburg before the Shoah. I am proud to be related to several of them.

Later, we found the Maria Theresia Gymnasium, which my grandfather's sister, Charlotte Bein, attended. I was touched to hear that the school and the Jewish Museum collaborate.

After a lunch of pumpkin soup and creamy spaetzle, we continued to the museum and synagogue. I

continue to be amazed by the optimism of Augsburg's pre-war Jewish community, building an ornate synagogue shortly before Hitler shattered their world.

And yet, some of us returned to find healing in the weaving of past and present. Michael Bernheim and Frank Schillinger facilitate that healing and I thank them for their generous spirits. ❧



Irene Reti in front of the Maria Theresia school, Augsburg

Theme article - Continued from Page 6

Irma was sent to the Auschwitz main camp, where the camp administration head needed a secretary. She was assigned to record the occupancy and death registers. "Day and night I saw the flames of the crematories flare up," she said.

On January 18, 1945, the camp was evacuated. Irma was transferred to the Ravensbrück concentration camp and its satellite, Malchow. On May 2, she was liberated by the soldiers of the Red Army. A compassionate woman took care of her in her home and later in a hospital until she had recovered. After staying in Berlin for half a year, she returned to Augsburg in 1946. She was the only Augsburg citizen who survived Auschwitz.

From 1946 on, she worked again for the Jewish community and, for a long time, she was also a member of the board. In 1950, she testified against Nazi war criminals including the Augsburg Gestapo officer responsible for deportations from Augsburg. She died in 1976 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Augsburg. ❧

A Passage Through Design: Discovery of Untermayer Graphics

By Tom Cramer. Tom is the son of Ernst and Marianne Cramer (née Untermayer) and the grandson of Eugene and Flora Untermayer. He resides in New York.

In an article for the December 2024 issue of **Connections**, my sister Claire Cramer Jebson and I wrote that every time we visit Augsburg, we go to the Jewish cemetery at Haunstetter Strasse. Each time we also go to the area where our grandfather, Eugene Untermayer, had his two stores - one for table linens, the other for bed linens and supplies. Our mother Marianne Untermayer as well as her siblings Richard and Hannah Untermayer all lived in an apartment above the store. This is now called the *Max Passage*, but was formerly known as the *Untermayer Passage*. The Untermayer family survived the Holocaust but lost their business.

Last year, the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia and the Jewish Community of Augsburg published a calendar with each month highlighting an aspect of Jewish history in Augsburg. The month of December included a photo of, and the following information about, the *Untermayer Passage*:

"In 1894, textile merchant Maier Untermayer (1855 - 1906) had his business premises on Maximilianstrasse connected to the rear building on Philippine-Welser-Strasse by a shopping arcade. As part of the reconstruction, the inner courtyard between the two buildings received a novel iron structure with a glass roof. The arcade, known ever since as the *Untermayer Passage*, caused considerable controversy at the time and was even mentioned in contemporary city guides.

It existed in its original form until the building's destruction during the air raids on Augsburg in February 1944. The *Max Passage*, built in the post-war period, now stands on the same site."

We have now decided to install a memorial plaque in remembrance of the former stores and living quarters. Among our family's old documents relating to the Leinenhaus und Wäschefabrik M. Untermayer, we found no originals showing the logo that we could use for the plaque.

After a 2023 visit to Augsburg with our cousin Michael Untermayer, his daughter Julia Rymer Brucker, and her daughter Mari, I decided to collect whatever Untermayer documents we had from the family hoping to find the best example of the company's logo.

In late 2023, a simple Google search for 'M. Untermayer Augsburg' led to a remarkable discovery. I found a link to the website of an Augsburg artist named Anta Rupflin. To my surprise I found 10 items on the site that included the name Untermayer: stationery, advertisements, wrapping paper, and a bookplate for Berta Untermayer, Eugene's mother and our mother's grandmother. This was an amazing trove of items that none of us had ever seen.

I contacted the website asking whether a particular piece was available for sale. The web administrator forwarded my inquiry to the granddaughter of the artist, writing: "... it's likely he's a descendant of the family that fled the Nazis. ..."

Shortly thereafter, Cornelia Kraus wrote to me: "... As Anta Rupflin's granddaughter, it's a stroke of luck for me to come into contact with someone who has a connection to her as well as to Augsburg's history."

Over the past two years, I have been corresponding with Cornelia. Claire and I finally met with her in Augsburg in September 2025.

Anta Rupflin, born in 1895, in Pasing near Munich, is one of the long-forgotten German artists of the "Lost Generation." Growing up in Augsburg, she began her artistic career early in the 20th century. Her realistic, expressive, sometimes Cubist, and later fully abstract works convey a deeply personal perception of landscapes, scenes, objects, and characters.

Her website <https://www.anta-rupflin.de/en/> includes a section of graphic art that includes work relating to the Untermayer family.



(L-R) Tom Cramer and Claire Cramer Jebson with Anta Rupflin's granddaughter, Cornelia Kraus, in Augsburg (September 2025)



(At left) Draft of an advertisement for Untermayer company



(At right) Label for M. Untermayer Augsburg - note the pine cone in the company logo which is a part of Augsburg's coat of arms!

This fall, we received permission from the building's management company to install a plaque at *Max Passage*, restoring the memory of its pre-Holocaust name: *Untermayer Passage*.



(L-R) Julia Rymer Brucker, Mari Brucker, Michael Untermayer, and Tom Cramer meeting with Augsburg Mayor Eva Weber (June 2022)

A Late Awakening to My Heritage in Augsburg

By Jeffrey L. Katz, a retired journalist, part-time bookseller, and author who lives in Bethesda, Maryland. He is the son of Margot Nathan and grandson of Else and Julius Fritz Landauer of Augsburg. You can learn more about Jeffrey's forthcoming book at his website, <https://www.jeffreykatzauthor.com/>.

It wasn't until I was in my early 20s that I learned much about my father's deep roots in and around Essen, Germany, his daring escape as a teenager, and the murder of practically his entire, extended family. You might call that a slow awakening.

It wasn't until I was in my mid-60s that I began to appreciate my mother's deep roots in and around Augsburg, and how she fled to South America as a youngster with her immediate family. You might call that a deep slumber.

What finally stirred my interest in Bavarian Swabia was working on my forthcoming book, ***Unsettled Ground: Reflections on Germany's Attempts to Make Amends***. I initially planned to focus solely on retracing my ancestors' steps in the North Rhine-Westphalia region, where my father's family had lived since at least 1800. I had plenty of information at my fingertips, thanks to one of the leaders of the local remembrance movement who befriended my family years ago.

But my writing stalled once I realized just how many children of Holocaust survivors had already written about their own such journeys. My enthusiasm for the task was rekindled only after I made two important decisions. One was to start researching the Jewish history in Augsburg and environs, introducing me to a very different set of characters and experiences. The other was to focus more on the Germans who've devoted much of their lives (and sometimes their careers) to honor the Jewish heritage their country once worked so hard to eliminate and then, for four decades after the war, neglected.

That's how I ended up in Hürben, at the Jewish cemetery bearing the remains of my great-great-grandparents, M. S. and Klara Landauer. I learned about the 400-year history of Jews in that town thanks to our guides that day, Wilhelm Fischer and Herbert Auer. The next day, I stood in the Jewish cemetery in Augsburg alongside two members of Augsburg's Remembrance Workshop (EWA) - Michael Bernheim (whose relatives are buried near mine) and Alfred Hausmann - as they patiently unspoiled stories about Augsburg's Jewish history.

One day later, I marveled at the ornate, gorgeous interior of the synagogue on Halderstrasse and delighted at references to the Landauers in the adjacent museum. Carmen Reichert, the museum's director, and Frank Schillinger, its education director, shared not only their scholarly perspectives of local Jewish history and efforts to keep the museum relevant, but also their personal journeys to careers devoted to Jewish studies. Their perspectives helped shape mine.

I benefitted greatly from the extensive writings of Gernot Römer, whose chronicles of the region's

Jewish community and its impact on the local cultural, economic, and political life, included profiles of my relatives. Benigna Schönhagen, the former long-time director of the Jewish museum, told me how she insisted, as a student, that she would study Germany's Jewish history, even as friends and colleagues urged her to move onto other pursuits. And I read how Jews and Gentiles worked together in post-war Augsburg under the leadership of Julius Spokojny, achieving his dream to restore the synagogue and create an adjoining Jewish museum.

Connecting with other descendants of Augsburg's Jewish community was also eye-opening. Suddenly I realized how much I had in common with people I had never met. I learned how many of you live with a mixture of pride in your Jewish heritage and deep sorrow that it was destroyed under such tragic circumstances that took so many lives. I understand how that leads to a complicated view of Germany today. Through your Zoom calls and emails to me - as well as the treasure trove of documents, videos, and stories now online - I have a deeper appreciation of Augsburg's Jewish history, how it was lost, and how many of you worked to piece it back together.

As a result, the book delves deeply into the notion of remembrance, responsibility, and reconciliation. I hope that whether you're a descendant of Jewish Augsburg or otherwise connected with the local remembrance movement, you'll find many aspects of the book that speak to your journey, too. ☸



(L-R) Elisabeth Schulte-Huxel (friend and leader of the remembrance group in Dorsten), Jeffrey Katz, Mollie Katz, Michael Bernheim, and Alfred Hausmann at the Jewish cemetery on Haunstetterstrasse Augsburg - October 17, 2022

Reclaiming My Family's Story

By Miriam Landor, a descendant of the Landauer family who recently published her memoir ***Stumbling Stones: the Holocaust, My Family and Me***.

Last year, I visited the synagogue of Augsburg for the first time.

Its architect was my grandfather's cousin Fritz Landauer (1883-1968), famous for his innovative use of the new material, concrete. My grandfather Richard (1882-1960) was a successful publisher of art and

culture books (*Delphin-Verlag München*). Richard's niece Dora (1916-2005), a social worker, married publisher Ted Schocken, of Schocken Books New York. These prestigious Landauers - Richard, Fritz, and Dora - had been born and educated in Augsburg, yet none of them finished their lives there. Instead, they were part of the diaspora of the 1930s, finding refuge in the United Kingdom and the United States. And I, their descendant, have only recently found their stories.

My journey of discovery began in 2014, when I was put in touch with the *Stolpersteine* (stumbling stones) Association of neighboring Landshut – the last German dwelling place of my father's family. I visited Bavaria repeatedly, honoring my family's *Stolpersteine*, building on connections, making new friends – and slowly uncovering the history of my extended family before, during, and after the Holocaust. Somehow, I became the family 'keeper'. Realizing that this information mustn't be lost again, it seemed natural to write it up as a memoir, delving ever more deeply into the impact of the Holocaust on the generations that followed – and on me.

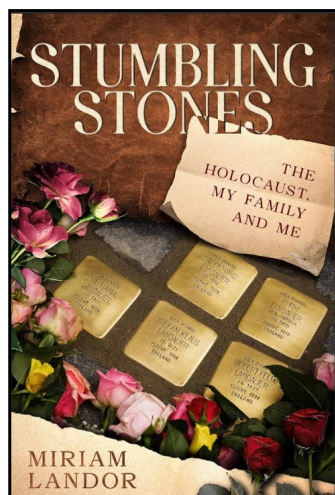
It was particularly distressing to record the fates of the women in this story. There is a big gap in my life where my female relations should have been, nurturing the next generations and sharing by example how to fulfil our potential. The wartime gravestone of Richard's wife, my grandmother Edith, is inscribed 'I was not born to share men's hatred but their love'. My great-grandmother Cilly, Edith's mother, died after falling (jumping?) from a high window when Nazi

stormtroopers raided their villa; they were after a reported stash of money, but the couple would have been in penury, their business forcibly sold and the proceeds diverted to a locked account. Before leaving Germany, my aunt Eva could only communicate with her schoolfriend through lowering messages in a basket from her attic window; her traumatic adolescence affected her all her life, leading to breakdowns and a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Despite these tragedies, I found that writing this memoir was therapeutic. After a disrupted childhood following my father's international career with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) - his lifelong concern being to rescue others - I know now why he couldn't settle anywhere. He didn't belong, and I inherited this lack of belonging.

I have to remember, though, that the only reason I know about the fates of the Landauers - children of Augsburg, victims of the Holocaust - is because present-day Germans, strangers, have freely shared the fruits of their own research. This awareness of their efforts to make reparation runs through my memoir, like the message through a stick of rock (a traditional British seaside candy with words running through it).

Augsburg was the cradle of my family; it holds a special place in my heart. ❧



Augsburg's Remembrance Workshop Highlights

By Michael Bernheim, Board of Directors, Augsburg's Remembrance Workshop (EWA)

Honoring Friedrich Strauss

In May 2019, an event at the Rudolf Diesel High School presented the lives of the known Nazi victims from Augsburg's Hochzoll district. A Remembrance Post for one of them, Friedrich Strauss, was announced. His last voluntarily chosen residence, before his deportation to Piaski in 1942 was at 147 Friedbergerstrasse. Since the house at this address and the adjacent ones were to be demolished and replaced by new buildings, the installation of the memorial had to wait several years. Finally, on May 30, 2025, it took place in the presence of numerous students from the Rudolf Diesel High School and the Werner von Siemens Middle School.

In the school yard of the former village elementary school, Alfred Hausmann talked about his meticulous research which was ultimately rewarded when he was able to find descendants of the Strauss family and return to them two old silver objects.

Four Rudolf Diesel students read the biographies of the Strauss family tracing their story until Friedrich's murder in the Piaski ghetto. The students from the Werner von Siemens school had created a multilingual podcast about the Friedrich Strauss project; during the ceremony, the Italian version was presented.

At the end of the ceremony, the Remembrance Post in front of building 147 was unveiled. It reminds passers-by of Friedrich Strauss, one of only two known Jewish residents from Hochzoll who were murdered in the Holocaust.

("Hochzoll", in English "High Toll," today a district of Augsburg with about 20,000 inhabitants, was for many centuries little more than a toll station at the bridge over the Lech River.)

Next Generation of Remembrance Posts

As *Connections* readers know, the first generation of Remembrance Posts, made of tombak, a brass-like alloy, proved highly susceptible to aging and weathering. In the meantime, the renowned arts and crafts shop Dochtermann has restored, or is preparing to restore, these memorials - with promising results. For example, the Einstein family post on Ulmerstrasse looks excellent after two years. They have produced a small series of new tombak posts. The first of these was installed and unveiled for Friedrich Strauss. Its location, Friedbergerstrasse, is a busy thoroughfare that will serve as a real-world test of the new material. Two more of the new generation posts are to be installed by the end of this year. We will keep you up to date.

Film for the International Audience

A new film about the remembrance work in Augsburg *Zeichen setzen* ("Set an Example") soon will be available with English subtitles. Professional film maker, Josef Pröll, along with Wolfgang Poeppel and myself, spent days translating and dubbing the film into English. ❧





Ask the Historian

appears periodically as a way to provide greater context to the history of Augsburg's Jewish community. It primarily focuses on the 1800s and pre-World War II years. We work 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.

What was everyday life like for Jewish women before emancipation?

By Christian Porzelt, Provenance Research & Education in Bavaria Swabia, Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia

Before Jewish emancipation in the 19th century, most Jewish women in southern Germany lived in tightly regulated religious communities that were themselves subject to numerous civic restrictions. Their social and economic positions were largely defined by patriarchal norms, both from within Jewish tradition and the surrounding Christian society. Thus, Jewish women's roles often centered on the household, family, and religious life. They managed domestic affairs and educated children in basic religious practice.

However, that is only one facet of their living conditions. Historical studies show that Jewish women were more likely to be involved in business than Christian women. They not only supported their husbands but were often independent businesswomen themselves.

A typical example of this is in the community of Kriegshaber. Starting in the 17th century, this village - just a few kilometers from Augsburg - had become one of the most important Jewish communities in Swabia. Around 1800, approximately 30 percent of the inhabitants were Jewish. Around 1830, the Jewish community reached its peak with 322 members.

Among these were many women who were self-employed, especially in the field of trade. Often, it was widowed women who secured their own livelihood, as well as those of their families, by pursuing a career in commerce or trade. The widow Karolina Lämmle ran a peddling business, Schnittwaren, with her son Jakob, selling textiles by the yard (meter) and old copper. Babette Krumbacher and her daughter Nanette were also active in peddling. In 1847, both Karoline Lämmle and Babette Krumbacher were among those Jewish merchants from Kriegshaber who were granted permission to trade in the city of Augsburg.

The life of businesswoman Therese Hirsch (1806-1874), who traded in jewelry and silverware, is particularly well-documented. After her husband's death in 1840, Therese Hirsch, at the age of 34, took over his business in addition to raising her four children. She was evidently very successful, as her commercial activities spanned more than 20 years. During this time, she was present at markets throughout Bavaria and placed large advertisements in newspapers to promote her business. She also played a significant role within the Jewish community of Kriegshaber. Apparently, she was the only woman with voting rights in the community assembly and owned a Torah scroll that was used during synagogue services. She retired from business in the 1860s and spent her final years at her brother's home in Amberg.

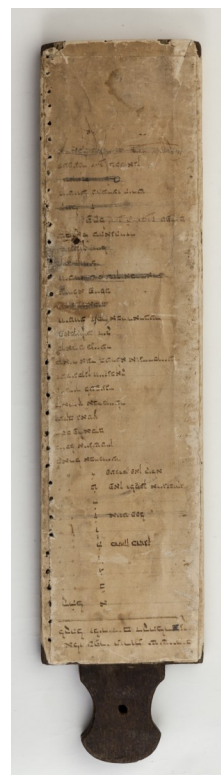
Married and unmarried Jewish women were also active in many other professions. For example, the wife of the merchant Seligmann Skutsch was a trained midwife who was educated in Munich. Babette Löwenfeld also worked in

the same occupation. Jewish midwives were primarily responsible for assisting in the births of Jewish children, though there is a documented case from 1830 in which a Jewish midwife attended the delivery of a Christian child. In the field of education, another member of the Skutsch family, Karoline, earned her living as an "industrial teacher."

The examples from Kriegshaber demonstrate that Jewish women in rural Swabia were already active participants in economic life long before legal and social equality for Jews was achieved in 1871. ✎

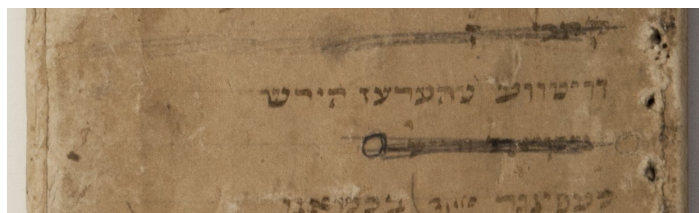


Above: Business advertisement by Therese Hirsch from 1842 (Bavarian State Library, Munich)



Left: List of Torah scrolls and their owners from the synagogue in Kriegshaber, mid 19th century (Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia)

Below: Image detail with the name of Therese Hirsch (Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia)



Can You Help Us Find the Story Behind This Bimah Cover?

By Christian Porzelt, Provenance Research & Education in Bavaria Swabia, Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia

Since 2021, the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) has been conducting a provenance research project focusing on its silver and textile collections. Among these objects is a bimah cover that has been part of the museum's holdings since its establishment in 1985. It can be assumed that this cover once adorned the bimah of one of the synagogues in Swabia, although its exact provenance remains unknown.

According to the Hebrew inscription, the bimah cover was donated on 9 Sivan 5672 (May 25, 1912) on the occasion of the bar mitzvah of a boy named Abraham by his grandparents Israel Jakob and Chaya Feigele Stern. The exact Hebrew inscription is:

ז"נ
ב"ה ישראל יעקב
ע"ז מרת ח' פיגלה שטערן
לבר מצוה נכדם
הבחור הנחמד אברהם שיחי'
ט' סיון תרע"ב לפק

From the date, we can infer that Abraham was born around 1899. It is unclear if Israel Jakob and Chaya Feigele Stern were his maternal or paternal grandparents. Therefore, it is unknown whether Abraham's surname was also Stern.

Jewish families with the name Stern lived in Wallerstein, Harburg, Augsburg, and Bittenwiesen. However, that does not mean that this family had to come from one of these places. Perhaps one of their descendants recognizes these names in their family tree and can help us to trace the cover's origin. If you have any information or family connections that may help, please contact Christian Porzelt, JMAS Provenance Researcher at christian.porzelt@jmaugsburg.de.

We would be deeply grateful to receive any information that can bring this object's story to light! Thank you.



Bimah Cover, 1912 with enlargement of the text shown at right

The History Detectives and their Stadtrally App

By Michael Bernheim, a descendant who lives in Augsburg.

On Thursday, September 25, 2025, I interviewed Joanna Linse and Eva-Maria Noppen-Eckart, history teachers at the Maria Ward High School in Augsburg, as well as Sinje Scholtz and Sophia Raab, 12th grade students and members of the group called "History Detectives". We all met in the school cafeteria, where the four of them devoted half an hour of their lunch break to the interview (thanks, ladies!).

MB: What are "History Detectives"?

Joanna: They started as a one-time project group and have meanwhile developed into a permanent voluntary course for each history class. As senior students graduate, younger ones move up.

MB: Why are they called "Detectives"?

Eva-Maria: Beyond learning history by attending classes and reading textbooks, they do real research, in archives or out there in the city.

MB: What did you find out?

Sinje: The first project was to find traces of Jewish life in Augsburg, way before the 20th century.

Joanna: We wanted to show that Jewish life in Augsburg is much more than the Holocaust.

Sophia: We found many things which you cannot see at first glance, from the outside.

MB: For example?

Eva-Maria: The Detectives found the location of the very first Augsburg synagogue, the medieval one.

MB: And where does the interactive "Stadtrally App" fit in?

Joanna: We wanted to make our findings available to a larger audience. Not in a booklet or in a museum, but right where they are or have been, in the streets of Augsburg. The app was developed with the help of the Bavarian State Center for Political Education (BLZ).

Sinje: By following the directions of the app on your smartphone, you can walk along the locations of former Jewish life through the historic center of Augsburg. The tour starts in the very center of Augsburg at the intersection of Maximilianstrasse and Judenberg.

MB: So, this is similar to the Paths of Remembrance offered by the Erinnerungswerkstatt (Remembrance Workshop)?

Sophia: Not quite; they do not compete. The Paths of Remembrance are mainly along the memorials of the Holocaust, whereas our interactive app leads you to locations representing the entire Jewish life in Augsburg.

MB: How long does the walk take?

Sinje: If you are familiar with the center of Augsburg, sixty minutes. If not, ninety.

MB: Do you have to understand German in order to use it?

Sophia: Unfortunately, yes.

MB: So, the next project could be an English translation. By the way, can elderly people cope with the challenges of this app?

History Detectives continues on Page 15

Historic Photo Album Arrives in Augsburg

By Gidon Lev who is a relative of Fritz Levy of Augsburg and his son, Frank Tuteur of California. Gidon lives in Givatayim, Israel.

For the first time, the project of the “Last Jewish Class of Augsburg” was formally presented as part of the *Lebenslinien* events on November 16 at the Sensemble Theatre in Augsburg. Frank Tuteur, the son of the teacher Fritz Levy and the owner of the historic photo album (Poesiealbum), travelled from California especially for the occasion. He generously donated the album to the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) and shared with the audience the moment when he first learned that his father had been imprisoned in the Dachau Concentration Camp.

Following introductory remarks by the director of the Theatre, Sebastian Seidel, and Augsburg’s Second Mayor, Martina Wild, I presented the main findings of my research on the individuals portrayed in the album.

Another important part of the event highlighted two *Poesiealben* - literally translates to “poetry albums” and refers to a type of friendship book or autograph album that is a cherished tradition in German culture, particularly among school children. The two albums belonged to Brigitte Mändle and Hansi Lustig, and in them, fourteen of the twenty-six pupils, along with several additional contributors, wrote touching and thoughtful dedications. These entries offer an intimate glimpse into the children’s personalities, friendships, hopes, and impressions of everyday life.

I concluded my presentation with a moving reflection: “These photo and poetry albums are more than a discovery. They are a beginning. A beginning to hear the quiet voices of those children who once lived in Augsburg, full of hope and joy for life, and then suddenly disappeared. Their stories remind us of what was lost - and what we must preserve.”

A particularly moving highlight of the event was the set of interviews conducted by Dr. Reichert with two of the former pupils: Henry Stern (98) and George Sturm (95). Special attention was devoted to the ten pupils who did not survive the Holocaust, especially the little-known story of the Charon family. Willi Charon, father of Erika and Günther, emigrated to Shanghai in late 1938 or 1939 hoping to establish a new life and later reunite with his family. Tragically, this reunion never occurred. His wife Gertrud and their children became victims of the Holocaust, while he was able to emigrate to the United States after the war. Two musical intermezzos enriched the evening and added emotional depth.

Public interest in the presentation was notably strong. A detailed article appeared in the local newspaper, and the Bavarian Broadcasting Company recorded a television interview with Dr. Carmen Reichert, Director of the Jewish Museum, as well as with Frank Tuteur and myself. I was pleased to present the unique miniature album to a wider audience.

Two successful workshops with school classes were held under the guidance of Frank Schillinger, the museum’s educational coordinator, with the active participation of Gidon Lev. The students were divided into four groups, each assigned to prepare a presentation on one of the following students in addition to the teacher Fritz Levy: Erika Charon, Otto Wassermann, or the three Zebrak sisters - Hedwig, Rosa, and Paula.

The JMAS is scheduled to close at the end of 2026 for a comprehensive renovation and is expected to reopen around 2030. The extraordinary photo album will hold a central place in the redesigned permanent exhibition.

Special thanks are extended to the JMAS and the City of Augsburg for making these meaningful events possible.

Editor’s note: To read the background on this story, please see the article “The Class of 1939” on the front page of the December 2024 issue of **Connections** https://jmaugsburg.de/files/2025/01/2024_12_december_newsletter_connections_djca_volume-7-no-2.pdf



(L-R) Dr. Carmen Reichert, Frank Tuteur, and Gidon Lev with the album at the Sensemble Theatre in Augsburg, November 2025

History Detectives - Continued from Page 14

Joanna: When Brigitte Bernheimer, a descendant from Paris, was here in Augsburg, we showed it to her. She was very interested. But, of course, language was a challenge, French, English, German...

MB: Being not young anymore, either, I'll have to try myself! Thank you very much for your time and your patience!

You can find more about the app at <https://www.blz.bayern.de/stadtrundgang-juedisches-leben-in-augsburg.html>. ☞



NEWS BRIEFS

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!**

Schuster Receives Augsburg Peace Prize

Dr. Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, is the recipient of the Augsburg Peace Prize 2025, honoring his decades of work against antisemitism and racism and his dedication to dialogue, remembrance, and social cohesion.

The award, announced by the City of Augsburg and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, was presented in November. Former Bundestag President Norbert Lammert delivered the laudatory address.

Born in Haifa in 1954, Schuster grew up in Lower



Mayor of Augsburg, Eva Weber, and Josef Schuster at the presentation of the Augsburg Peace Prize, November 2025

Franconia, practiced medicine for many years, and continues to serve as an emergency doctor. Since 2014, he has led Germany's Central Council of Jews and also serves as Vice President of both the World and European Jewish Congresses.

The Augsburg

Peace Prize, endowed with €12,500, honors individuals promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence. This year's special award marks the 375th anniversary of the Peace Festival, Augsburg's unique celebration of religious peace.

Discussing DJCA at Binghamton University

DJCA co-founder Diane Castiglione was invited by the History Department of her undergraduate alma mater, Binghamton University, to do a presentation on September 27, 2025 about her work with DJCA. The department is interested in demonstrating the different ways that a history background can be applied. Diane's talk, therefore, focused on how the DJCA contributes at a grass-roots level to the body of knowledge about the history of the pre-war Jewish community. While on campus, she connected with a history professor who specializes in early-modern Europe and whose first book was on religious coexistence in Augsburg during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It's indeed a small world to find two people with both Binghamton and Augsburg connections!

The Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia turns 40

The Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia celebrated its 40th anniversary on October 29 with a ceremony in the synagogue. Speakers included Bavarian Minister President Markus Söder and Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Founded in 1985 alongside the rededication of the synagogue, JMAS is one of Germany's first Jewish museums. It was created by citizens seeking to preserve Augsburg's Jewish heritage at a time when Jewish history was often overlooked.

Today, the museum is a leading cultural and educational center. The anniversary program featured a panel discussion on the role of Jewish museums today and an exhibition highlighting four decades of its work.



JMAS' 40th anniversary lobby exhibit includes a panel relating to the descendants community

New York to Build a Permanent Holocaust Memorial in the State Capital

On December 1, 2025, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation to establish a memorial at the State Capital in Albany to recognize victims and survivors of the Holocaust and to help educate students and the public about the dangers of antisemitism, racism, and unchecked hate.

The law, based on the unanimous passage of legislation in both the Senate and Assembly, directs the state Office of General Services (OGS) to oversee the design and location of the Memorial in the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza.

The State Memorial is the result of years of hard work by a dedicated team of volunteers including **Connections** Editor Deborah Sturm Rausch, who is a member of the Board of the [Capital District Jewish Holocaust Memorial](#) (the nonprofit that has been working to establish a permanent Holocaust Memorial in the region) and fellow descendant Josh Oppenheimer who has also been involved in this effort.



Rendering of the proposed New York State Holocaust Memorial. (Rendering courtesy of CDJHM)

If CDJHM's vision for the Memorial is selected, there will be opportunities to honor and memorialize family members with a connection to New York State, including those who survived, those who fought against the Nazis, and those who were perished during the Holocaust.

For further information, feel free to contact Debbie at djcaugsburg@gmail.com. ✳

**NEXT
issue**



Coming in Summer 2026...

Reflections on the Descendants Reunion

The theme for our next issue of **Connections** is: ***Reflections on the Descendants Reunion.***

With the Descendants Reunion taking place in April 2026, our summer issue will be dedicated to sharing reflections and impressions of the events in Augsburg.

For some participants, the reunion will mark their first opportunity to visit Augsburg and explore their family's history there. Others will be returning, from attending the previous reunion and/or from earlier visits. All will undoubtedly have experiences that will move them, spur moments of reflection and understanding, uncover new information, or enlighten them about their family and the pre-war Jewish community.

We warmly invite you to share what impact your participation in the Descendants Reunion has had on you and your family in this special issue of **Connections**.

IMPORTANT NOTE: As usual, we will send out a more formal call for articles with more specifics. For now, we want to let everyone know that, because of the timing of the reunion, we will be departing from our normal production timeline and format. ***We tentatively plan to issue the call for articles on May 15 with a submission deadline of June 15. The "June" issue will therefore become a "summer" issue.***

While the focus of this issue will be on the reunion, we will, of course, welcome all contributions, and will continue to look for Family Spotlight articles, your recipes, news of meet-ups, news briefs, etc. We encourage those who are attending the reunion to take notes while you are there, and also to take pictures that can be used to accompany your articles.

Please send your submissions, memories, or family photos **by June 15, 2025**, to djcaugsburg@gmail.com. We look forward to your contributions! ***Thank you.*** ☿