

CONNECTIONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AUGSBURG



Summer 2026

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Our Augsburg Reunion: April 19 - 23, 2026

By Diane Castiglione

For four days, one could almost feel the presence of Augsburg's prewar Jewish community. More than 70 descendants from six countries gathered to celebrate and explore our shared heritage. Under the leadership of Director Carmen Reichert, the staff of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia (JMAS) created a varied and meaningful program that had something for everyone – including time to explore places important to individual family histories.

We began on Sunday evening, April 19, with an informal welcome dinner at a local brewery. The excitement was palpable – even the restaurant staff remarked on the energy in the room! That spirit carried over into Monday morning as we gathered at JMAS for the “official” welcome – already talking as though we'd known each other for years. There were various tours of the museum, synagogue, and Haunstetterstrasse cemetery. Later, descendants Tom Cramer and his sister Claire Jebesen led a dedication ceremony unveiling a plaque at today's Maxpassage reconnecting the site with its former name, *Untermayerpassage* (see article on page 19).

Mayor Eva Weber hosted a reception on Monday evening that became one of the reunion's emotional highlights. DJCA presented Mayor Weber with a certificate recognizing the city's efforts under her leadership to honor and preserve the history of Augsburg's Jewish community and its descendants. The four daughters of Hansi Lustig, a student in the last Jewish class in Augsburg, shared their mother's story before donating her *Poesiealbum* (friendship or autograph album) to the museum. It was a touching moment that brought tears to our eyes.

Tuesday offered a variety of tours. Options included: Augsburg's 2000-year history, its UNESCO-listed water management system, Bertolt Brecht's connections to the city, the lives of Jewish and politically persecuted medical doctors, the Dachau sub-camp Halle 116, and the Augsburg Path of Remembrance. In the afternoon, we learned about Augsburg's many remembrance initiatives. That evening, fellow descendant Cantor Assaf Levitin, the great-grandson of Josef Zebrak, the last prayer leader of the Kriegshaber synagogue, performed a memorable concert.

Wednesday focused on rural Jewish communities from which our ancestors came. Some descendants traveled to Ichenhausen while others toured the cemetery and synagogue in Kriegshaber. Later, descendants and local high school students met in small groups to discuss how our families' histories have shaped our lives and the importance of building understanding across generations, cultures, and histories. Those talks could easily have continued much longer!

The final day brought us back to JMAS, where we gathered with the Augsburg synagogue leadership for an update about the ongoing renovations of the synagogue and museum (see article on page 18). We then shared many ways we tell our families' stories before those who were left gathered together for a closing luncheon.

Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for the effort that went into planning this extraordinary event. Carmen and the entire JMAS staff ensured everything ran smoothly. We owe a special thanks to Sarah Schwab who skillfully coordinated the many moving parts such an event requires. It's impossible to name everyone who contributed, but our thanks extend to the members of the Remembrance Working Group (EWA), especially Michael Bernheim and Wolfgang Poeppel, who toured with us and organized the descendant/student dialogue; the students; and Mayor Weber and her staff. And finally, thank you to everyone who traveled to Augsburg to honor and bear witness to the former community from which we descend. ☸



*Attendees of the 2026 Reunion
of Descendants of the Jewish
Community of Augsburg*

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A Message from our Co-Chairpersons

Written by Diane Castiglione

The events of the 2026 Descendants Reunion remind me of why the name of our newsletter – **Connections** – is so perfect. For well over a year, Bettina, Debbie, and I were immersed in planning the Reunion. As the dates drew near, we were all filled with great anticipation. The 2017 reunion had been a seminal event for each of us. Among other things, it was the catalyst for DJCA and this newsletter. I attended that reunion with 22 other members of the Einstein family, a number of whom I'd never met before. It was a remarkable experience for all of us.

However, this time, for a variety of reasons, my son Michael and I would be the only representatives of the Einsteins. I wondered how it would feel to attend without being surrounded by our family. I needn't have been concerned. As people arrived for the welcome dinner on Sunday night, I immediately felt like I was attending a family reunion with relatives whose names were familiar but who I may not have previously met. While we may not all be related by blood, we do form a family that is joined together by shared history, experience, and memory. It is an incredible dynamic, one that several people have remarked upon in their reflections throughout this issue.

There were two moments that stood out in particular for me. As others have written, the presentation to the museum of Hansi Lustig's autograph book by her daughters was immensely emotional and touching. For me, another emotional highpoint was Cantor Assaf Levitin's concert. He is the great-grandson of Josef Zebrak, the last prayer leader of the Kriegshaber synagogue. The Einstein family was instrumental in hiring Josef Zebrak and my mother remembered the family clearly. For example, she fondly recalled joining the Zebrak daughters to burn *chametz* in preparation for Pesach. The concert transported me across time, connecting me with my ancestors. There I sat in Augsburg, listening to Cantor Levitin's beautiful voice just as my mother would've listened to his great-grandfather's. What a poignant moment!

Our reunion experiences underscore the strength that comes from fostering and sharing these *connections* – *connections* that may exist among our own families, more broadly with the descendant community, or more widely with Augsburg and Germany. They ensure that the stories of Augsburg's Jewish families will not be forgotten. ❧

From the Editor

Deborah Sturm Rausch

Our connections are strong.

Our recent reunion in Augsburg reminded us just how many meanings that word *connections* holds. We are connected to our ancestors, to the places where they lived, to their stories and memories - - and now, to one another.

What began as a gathering of descendants quickly became something more. Although we arrived from different places and different branches of families, we soon felt like an extended family, sharing stories, discoveries, photographs, and memories. Being together in Augsburg made our shared history come alive in a deeply personal way.

Working on the reunion was a labor of love, as is the continued work to bring you **Connections**. I am especially grateful to the JMAS staff and the EWA volunteers for all they did to make the reunion so meaningful. Your generosity, care, knowledge, and hard work created the setting in which these connections could flourish.

And to all the descendants who attended: thank you for coming, for sharing, and for opening your hearts to new friendships. As you will read in the many theme articles in this issue, the feelings we all had were real. We left Augsburg with more than memories... we left with new connections that will hopefully continue and grow.

As we face the current climate where many of us are feeling unsafe, and hearkening back to the bad memories our ancestors may have shared with us, it was amazing to come together in a place where we all felt safe. It felt to many like coming home... home to a place where most of us never lived before, but home to a place where our hearts belonged.

May we carry these connections forward, preserving the stories of those who came before us, strengthening the bonds among their descendants, and building upon the very real connections made in Augsburg while we were together. May the ties that bind continue to grow and reach into the future, connecting us and generations yet to come. ❧



L-R: Diane Castiglione and Bettina Kaplan



Deborah Sturm Rausch

Letter from JMAS Director Carmen Reichert

Dear Descendants,

The Reunion lasted only a few days, but it will shape our work - and us - for months and years to come. Even now, months later, the memories remain incredibly vivid. We still find ourselves talking about the Reunion during our lunch breaks, recalling special moments, remarkable conversations, and the people we had the privilege of meeting. We continue to feel deeply connected to everyone who took part.

We are profoundly grateful that we were able to witness such extraordinary encounters. Families whose histories had once been closely intertwined in Augsburg met one another for the very first time through the Reunion. Descendants discovered unexpected connections, shared family stories, and found pieces of their histories coming together like a puzzle.

The Reunion also brought together pieces of our own work. For years, we have known countless names from documents, photographs, and archival records. This gathering gave faces and stories to many of those names. People who had long been part of our research suddenly became real to us in an entirely new way.

As I walk through the streets of Augsburg now, I still carry that profound sense of connection with me - the stories the descendants shared with us, and the stories we shared with them. I think of the people we miss when we walk down these streets: those who were killed, but also those who never had the chance to be born. I find myself reflecting on the people who pass by every day, unaware of who lived on these very streets eighty or ninety years ago, of the lives they built here, and of the families whose stories continue to echo through the city today. Sharing their stories is one of our most important responsibilities at the museum.

The Reunion may have lasted only a few days, but its impact will stay with us for a very long time. We are deeply thankful to every descendant who traveled to Augsburg, shared their family's story, and became part of this unforgettable experience.

And we are deeply grateful to all those who paved the way for this Reunion. To the survivors who maintained contact during and after the war, often under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. To those who organized the first reunions and kept this idea alive over the years. And to my predecessors at the museum, who carried this vision forward and continued to nurture it.

Last but not least, we are especially grateful to Bettina, Diane, and Debbie, who first sparked the idea for this Reunion, who never gave up, and whose dedication and commitment made this gathering something truly extraordinary.

With warm regards,

Carmen Reichert



Carmen Reichert, Director

MEET THE STAFF *Reunion Reflections*

Editor's Note: We are changing from our regular interview format for this section to provide you with **Reunion Reflections** from some of the staff who were involved in it.

Sarah Schwab, Programs, Project Management, & Publications

Looking back on one of the most memorable and emotional events that I have planned in my career makes me smile. It was quite a long process: planning began two years ago with a visit to the museum from Bettina Kaplan, representing the DJCA. Knowing of the upcoming temporary closure of the synagogue for renovations, we decided that it would be best to organize another Descendants Reunion before renovations began. We also discussed initial ideas for individual events which became more concrete through a survey sent out to the descendants in the summer of 2024.

Based on the survey results, we set a date and began to discuss how best to accommodate the wishes and needs of everybody attending. Michael Bernheim, a local descendant, became a part of the organizing team. Over time and through many Zoom meetings, the program took shape. I also got in contact with the other organizations dedicated to remembrance in Augsburg to include them in the event and give the descendants the opportunity to meet them. Countless emails were written and phone calls made, and together we managed to arrange everything from hotels, aide services, and the mayor's reception to guided tours, name tags, and registration procedures. Our goal was to try to cater for everybody's wishes and needs while avoiding an overloaded schedule and allowing people time to spend as they wished.

When everybody started to arrive, it was an amazing feeling to finally connect faces and voices to the names and email addresses I had gone through countless times. Nevertheless, none of the planning prepared me for the actual reunion. Being busy beforehand might even have kept me from realizing how much this week would be set apart from our daily work due to its emotional intensity. Every event had its own touching, moving, and sometimes sad moments. But we also shared a lot of laughs and simply enjoyed each other's company.

None of this would have been possible without the teamwork that went into organizing the reunion. My personal highlights of the week were the immense shared effort and dedication between the whole JMAS team and Michael Bernheim, Bettina, Diane, and Debbie as well as the gratitude and appreciation shown by everyone who attended. Both brought me joy and positive energy that I am still drawing upon today, and I would like to thank everybody for that from the bottom of my heart.

Many memories continue to return to me on my daily walks through the city. They remind me of what is important and lies at the core of our work at the museum: to connect people with a place, with history, but most importantly, with one another in a shared sense of humanity. I will forever be grateful to have been able to do just that; to organize and experience an entire week of human connection.

Meet the Staff continues on Page 4

Annika Ramsaier, *Communications and Public Relations*

The reunion is one of the most meaningful and cherished memories from my time working at the Jewish Museum so far. Not only did I get to meet so many descendants of families whose names I often come across in my daily work, but it also made their stories feel so much more vivid. It was also touching for me to feel the appreciation many descendants have for our work at the museum. It reminded me once again of the value our work holds and why I love working here so much.

One emotional moment during the city tour on Jewish doctors during the Nazi era stayed with me in particular. At the memorial band for Paul and Hedwig Englaender, tour guide Dr. Elisabeth Friedrichs explained that on the night the couple took their own lives to avoid impending deportation, Dr. Martha Zeitler and her husband stood by the Englaenders and accompanied them. What the participants hadn't realized before: descendants from both families were present on the tour - a fact they only grasped in that very moment. Jeffrey Englander and Leanne Zimmerman looked at each other and embraced. A special moment filled with immense emotion.

Nathalie Jäger, *Collections and Archives*

The unveiling of the commemorative plaque for the Untermayer company (*Leinenhaus und Wäschefabrik M. Untermayer*) in the former Untermayer Passage was a particularly moving moment for me during the reunion. Collaborating and conducting research together with the family's descendants - especially Claire Jebesen and Tom Cramer - was a unique and deeply meaningful experience. Through these encounters, both the history of the family and that of the Untermayer company have taken on much more personal significance for me.

The reunion underscored what lies at the heart of our work: people and their stories. Research and the collection, exhibition, and preservation of objects form the foundation of museum work. However, historical facts can only truly be conveyed when we tell the stories of the people behind these objects, making them accessible and tangible.

Meeting the descendants during the reunion helped bridge the gap between earlier research, archival documents, and objects from the museum's collection and the present day. It enabled the creation of personal connections to individual families and brought history into a living context. I am therefore deeply grateful for the opportunity to meet each and every descendant and will look back on this week in April with great fondness for years to come.

Franziska Marx, *Museum Shop Manager*

This was my first reunion as a staff member of the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia, and because it was my first, it will always hold a special place in my heart.

Leanne, Andrea, Margo, and Karen made this week truly unforgettable for me. It was both an honor and a pleasure to work with them and to help make the presentation of Hansi Lustig's album such a meaningful and memorable experience.

The presentation of Hansi Lustig's album, interwoven with her personal story, was deeply moving and remains one of the highlights of this extraordinary gathering. The evening was filled with moments of profound emotion that touched everyone in the room. When Karen's song began, a remarkable sense of togetherness and solidarity emerged. The emotions were almost palpable. They united everyone present in a shared, deeply moving experience.

I will never forget this moment of music, images, and remembrance. Thank you all for giving me memories that I will carry with me forever - memories that will continue to inspire and shape me for years to come.

Monika Müller, *Deputy Director and Curator*

I am deeply grateful to have attended the reunion. It was great to reconnect with so many familiar faces and resume our conversations, and I was very pleased to make a lot of new connections. To witness firsthand how many people were brought together and connected with the museum by the descendants' network in recent years was impressive and inspiring.

Feeling that bond and the trust placed in the museum's work was a very special experience for me. I was particularly moved by the family stories and memories shared with me during the visits to the Jewish cemeteries. They have broadened my knowledge of Augsburg's Jewish history and deepened my understanding of descendant communities.

Above all, they have made me keenly aware of how important it is to preserve the legacy of Augsburg's Jewish pre-war community and to keep its memory alive for future generations.



(Left) Sarah Schwab congratulates the youngest attendee, Benjamin Stock (son of Molly Stock and great-grandson of Hansi Lustig Glickman) for completing his "Descendants BINGO" sheet at the reunion welcome session.

(Above Right) Annika Ramsaier takes a photo during the reunion.



(Below Right) Monika Müller was happy to connect with descendants.





Reflections on the 2026 Descendants Reunion

This issue's theme is: **Reflections on the Descendants Reunion**. This past April more than 70 people from six countries traveled to Augsburg for the Descendants Reunion. We asked attendees to share their reflections about the Reunion and about Augsburg for this issue of **Connections**. We are pleased to share these reflections with you.

What Connects Us to Augsburg and to Each Other

By Jeffrey L. Katz, a veteran journalist, part-time bookseller, and author who lives in Bethesda, Maryland. He is the son of Margot Nathan and grandson of Elise and Julius Fritz Landauer of Augsburg. He's the author of **Unsettled Ground: Reflections on Germany's Attempts to Make Amends**.

The closest experience I've had to time travel was being in Augsburg for a reunion of descendants of its pre-war Jewish community. Modern conveniences and contemporary issues faded to the background when in the company of people and places connected to my family's past.

There were frequent reminders about what life was like in that tight-knit community before it was destroyed a century ago. Some occurred at the synagogue that a Landauer relative designed and where my family once worshipped. Others came at more unlikely places – a pedestrian shopping arcade, a restaurant, even a laundromat. Some were impromptu interactions with fellow time travelers, moments that simply weren't possible when my wife Mollie and I visited Augsburg in 2022.

This was the first reunion for Augsburg's Jewish community without survivors in attendance. The responsibility for keeping alive memories of those who once lived there now falls largely to those descendants interested in family history. We embrace it and talk about it – sometimes at great length – with those who share our ties to Augsburg.

That was obvious at the Sunday dinner that served as the reunion's first event. It didn't matter whether we greeted familiar faces or new ones. No one seemed like a stranger. We shared a history, even if it went back a generation or two. The wait staff compared the gathering to a wedding reception where everyone was connected, even if we weren't quite sure how.

There were personal moments during our time in Augsburg that lent themselves to quiet reflection. I'm thinking especially of being in seat 42 in the sanctuary of the synagogue on Halderstrasse, our children at my side. I felt a strong connection to my grandfather, Julius Fritz Landauer, while sitting in the seat that was once reserved for him.

Other moments were possible only because of the presence of other descendants. I met two recently discovered cousins, Bettina Kaplan and Miriam Landor, soon after we arrived.

An otherwise mundane trip to the laundromat in a largely unfamiliar city was enlivened when another customer, Anne Regenstein, recognized us and introduced herself as a fellow descendant.

At another point, I paused at a restaurant table filled with descendants. I mentioned to Deborah Sturm Rausch that I recently learned my uncles had attended early reunions. She took out her phone and retrieved an archival photo of her dad as a young man, playing an accordion. The group of people around him included my Uncle Fred Rosenau, grinning widely. I had never asked Uncle Fred about Augsburg. Now I was reconnecting with an old friend of his, one generation removed.

Though no one at the April reunion volunteered to play the accordion, music brought us together a couple of times. Once was a concert by Cantor Assaf Levitin, the great-grandson of the last cantor of the Kriegshaber synagogue. How symbolic to have an Israeli-born cantor, now living in Berlin and working at a synagogue in Hamburg, perform for a group of fellow descendants in Augsburg.

Another musical event was courtesy of retired Cantor Karen Berman. Though her voice is no longer strong enough to perform, it was loud and clear during a recorded version of her song, "Stars in the Universe." The opening words were well chosen for an audience walking in their ancestors' footsteps:

There are stars in the universe though they have long been extinct

Whose radiance is still seen here on Earth.

And there are people whose brilliance still lights up the world

'Tho they have long since made their journeys from birth.

Berman is one of four daughters of JoAnn (Hansi) Lustig Glickman, who emigrated to the United States in 1939 at the age of ten. Berman joined her sisters in presenting to the Jewish museum their mother's photo album from Augsburg's last Jewish school. The pictures included classmates who were later murdered during the Holocaust.

Mayor Eva Weber showed you needn't be a descendant to get caught up in the emotions. She had begun the evening with a speech during which her eyes rarely left her script. But her composure failed her after Berman's song was finished and the photo album was handed to Carmen Reichert, director of the museum. The mayor wept, struggling to speak. "I have no words," she said of the photo book, adding that she was honored that we'd all returned to Augsburg.



Author Jeffrey L. Katz in the sanctuary of the synagogue on Halderstrasse (in the seat formerly reserved for his grandfather), flanked by his children, Ben and Emily.

Theme articles continue on Page 6

Our shared *connections* were on Tom Cramer's mind that afternoon when he and his sister Claire Jebesen unveiled a plaque marking the location of their parents' former linen store. He looked out at those of us who gathered for the ceremony and said our relatives were probably all customers.

Our last day in Augsburg gave us a chance to say goodbye to the city's pre-war Jewish community in spiritual terms. That's what I thought of when saying Kaddish at the end of a morning service in the synagogue's chapel. I chanted the words directly under a memorial plaque headed by names that would have been unfamiliar to me when we first visited Augsburg four years earlier. I've since learned about and written about three of them.

They were Ernst Jacob, the last rabbi before the war, whose series of newsletters later connected former congregants forced to scatter across the globe; Julius Spokojny, who had an outsized role as leader of the city's post-war Jewish community, helping to restore the synagogue and create the Jewish museum; and Mietek Pemper, who typed Schindler's List that saved 1,200 souls at the Kraków-Plaszow concentration camp, then later served as an influential speaker for peace and reconciliation in Augsburg.

They all kept Augsburg's Jewish community connected during difficult times, when tragedy forced it apart.

When I think back to the reunion, I have a stronger sense of my family's deep ties to Augsburg that extends beyond the buildings and exhibits, the memorials, and the plaques. Now it includes the families whose ancestors were once connected with mine.

When Two Family Histories Converged

By Leanne Zimmerman, of Lexington, Kentucky, the daughter of JoAnn (Hansi Lustig) Glickman from Augsburg, Germany. Hansi was also a member of Fritz Levy's Jewish class.

One of the most moving, serendipitous, and goosebump-raising moments of my visit to Augsburg is an experience I had on a tour on the Tuesday of the DJCA reunion. To best understand the impact of this experience, you need a little background. About two years before my sisters and I discovered the DJCA, I was contacted by a researcher, Hilla Lavie. Hilla was researching female Jewish physicians in Augsburg, Germany during the war years. She found us through archived family photo albums and papers our mother had donated to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I learned a little more about my great-aunt, Martha Lustig Zeitler, MD, and her husband, Georg Zeitler, MD, from Ms. Lavie. (I already knew my great-aunt, who was born Jewish, became a Protestant when she married her Protestant husband.) Also through my connection with Ms. Lavie, I became acquainted with Dr. Elisabeth Friedrichs of Augsburg, who has also done extensive research on Jewish physicians in Augsburg.

My son and his husband, my daughter and I, another family, and a few others, had the honor of participating in a poignant walking tour of the homes and offices of Jewish doctors who practiced in the 1920s and 30s. This tour, led by Dr. Friedrichs, brought a profoundly moving connection with a fellow descendant, Jeffrey Englander, and his family.

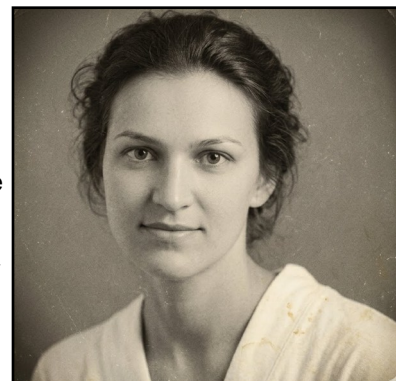
The dedicated medical professionals we learned about were cruelly stripped of their right to practice medicine, leading some to emigrate, some to go into hiding, others to make difficult choices about their own lives, and, tragically, many to face their fate in death camps.

The final story we heard on the tour was of Dr. Paul Englaender, a dentist who made an incredibly brave choice in the face of unimaginable adversity. At that time, assisted suicide was legal in Germany. My great-aunt and her husband were some of the compassionate doctors who provided aid. Great-Aunt Martha, fortunate to be in a privileged intermarriage due to her non-Jewish husband, was allowed to practice medicine for a while longer. I knew she had helped several doctors, but I hadn't known the specifics until that moment.

As Dr. Friedrichs shared the story of Dr. Englaender, she revealed that my great-aunt and great-uncle had sat with him as he passed away. Before he passed away, Dr. Englaender asked my great-aunt to give his gold watch to his son Hans, which she did. The Englaender family knew of Dr. Englaender's choice to end his life, but did not know the details.

I happened to be standing beside Dr. Englaender's grandson, Hans's son Jeffrey Englander, and shared with him that she was my great-aunt. We were both instantly in tears and exchanged huge hugs. Others in the group were also brought to tears. A reporter, Patrick Wehner, who was walking with our group interviewed us immediately to write an article for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/augsburg-treffen-holocaust-nachfahren-us-familie-ritchie-boys-li.3471103?reduced=true>.)

This astounding, moving moment will be one of several core memories created while my family and I attended the DJCA reunion. The history that binds all of us descendants is not fully known, nor in many cases will ever be known, but reunions like this make us feel like we have more "family" than we realize.



Martha Lustig Zeitler, MD, 1923



(L-R) Descendants Jeffrey Englander and Leanne Zimmerman outside 6 Annastrasse, Paul and Hedwig Englaender's last chosen place of residence. The couple died at the Steinfeld residence located at 20 Bahnhofstrasse, where their names are also listed on the memory band.

Family Impressions of our Reunion Trip to Augsburg

By Jeffrey Englander, grandson of Dr. Paul and Hedwig Steinfeld Englaender (descendants of the Steinfeld, Heilbronner and Wimpfheimer families) with contributions from Alise Kreditor, his wife, of Great Neck, New York and their children: Jacob Englander, of Brooklyn, New York; Rachel Englander, of Boca Raton, Florida; and Samuel Englander, of Portland, Oregon

From Jeffrey Englander

I last visited Augsburg with my parents, John and Eva Englander, and my older son, Jacob, in 1993. At the time, we had the benefit of my father's providing a tour and his childhood recollections of the happy home from which he was thrust out, escaping into a new world in 1938. I must admit to having had trepidations about returning without my beloved tour guide in 2026 (Dad passed away in 2007), unsure of what we would encounter or what meaning it would have. On the very lovely and positive side, we were accompanied by all three of our children, each of whom left young children and spouses behind to join us in this important trip.

Those concerns immediately evaporated with our welcome meeting and dinner on Sunday night, April 19 as everyone was engaged and happy to meet new descendants or visit again with family and friends, old and new. Of course, having arrived on Saturday, we had already visited the remembrance bands recalling the lives and deaths of my grandparents, Paul and Hedwig (Steinfeld) Englaender, and great-grandparents, Hugo and Lina Steinfeld. We would pay our respects at the Jewish cemetery the next day at their gravesites as well as that of great-great-grandparents, Michael and Henriette (Wimpfheimer) Heilbronner, all important contributors to Jewish life in Augsburg - and, as to the Wimpfheimers and Heilbronners, also in Ichenhausen, to which city we paid a lovely visit as well.

As a family, we enjoyed our visit to the Leopold Mozarthaus (we are Mozart lovers) and enjoyed our special visit to the synagogue where my Dad was a Bar Mitzvah in 1932. More than anything, though, we were amazed - and truly heartened - by the immense amount of planning which went into the reunion event by so many

people, including most notably, a large number of non-Jews whose time and effort were fully apparent. So, too, the outpouring of events and words to make us feel



(L-R) Jeffrey, Sam, and Jake Englander, Mayor Eva Weber, Rachel Englander, and Alise Kreditor

at home and comfortable in a gorgeous city which, if lucky, had cast our ancestors out, or who otherwise perished under Nazi rule. Chief among these was the mayor's reception as well as other tours and special events.

For us in particular, the most important and surprising event was the tour given by Dr. Elisabeth Friedrichs commemorating the lives and Holocaust-mandated paths of the persecuted Jewish doctors of Augsburg. This tour was exceedingly well-researched by Dr. Friedrichs (who has now become a friend—we have already visited with her and her husband Michael when they recently visited New York City). Its last stop was in front of the building at 6 Annastrasse, the home and dental office of my grandfather, Dr. Paul Englaender and his wife Hedwig (née Steinfeld), as well as my father's home during his 18 years in Augsburg. At this site (which we had visited earlier and concerning which we had all seen the video tour given by my father in 1993), we learned new information about my grandfather's areas of specialization within his dental practice. Our grandparents, along with two other couples, upon learning that they would be deported the next day to a labor camp, as an alternative to the horrors which lay ahead, determined to take their own lives that evening (March 7, 1943).

What we did not know and what we learned during the tour was that a 7th person, Dr. Martha Zeitler (protected by her marriage to a non-Jew), had been in attendance as they took their lives, assisting and comforting them in the process.

Unaware until that moment of the existence and identity of this person, we learned as we stood outside this building that she was the great-aunt of reunion participant Leanne Zimmerman who at that moment was standing next to me on the tour. I was stunned and speechless to say the least, as was Leanne. Happily, that moment and the warm, emotional embrace that followed was caught and



(L-R) Sam, Alise, Rachel, Jake, and Jeffrey Englander pay homage to Paul and Hedwig Englaender in front of the Erinnerungsband (remembrance band) erected in their memory.



(L-R) Jake, John, and Jeffrey Englander at the Augsburg synagogue in 1993



(L-R) Rachel, Alise, Jeffrey, Sam, and Jake at the reunion welcome dinner

preserved in photos, as was the sense of what it all meant and how it proved the importance and wonder of reunions such as this one and the connections they engender. (The entire story was chronicled in an article written by Patrick Wehner and published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/augsburg-treffen-holocaust-nachfahren-us-familie-ritchie-boys-li.3471103?reduced=true>.)

I and my two sons rejoiced in consuming much of the local cuisine including just baked *Leberkäse* and local *Hefeweizen*, while Alise and Rachel stayed with more green and leafy fare. Most important, of course, was the togetherness and the knowledge that each of our kids was now equipped to show my father's birthplace and history to the next generation.

Thanks to all who made the trip special for us, including Sarah Schwab, Dr. Carmen Reichert, Annika Ramsaier and Michael Bernheim (who was instrumental in getting the remembrance post of my grandparents cleansed and rejuvenated) among many, many others; not to forget my cousin Debbie Sturm Rausch! Thank you!

From Alise Kreditor:

As an in-law child of descendant John Englander, I had heard many stories about his wonderful life in Augsburg as a child and young teen and even knew well some of his lifelong friends who were also from Augsburg. But as an American Jew with no prior connection to Germany (my family came over in the early 20th century from other parts of Europe and Ukraine), initially I had difficulty understanding how my father-in-law, whom I loved dearly, could have such a strong connection to the city and country that destroyed his family. But as time went on and I learned more about the rich cultural life Augsburg afforded him, I realized those first 18 years of his life were as important to him as his subsequent 69 years. And being included in the descendants' trip made this all crystal-clear.

While I knew the basic story of my father-in-law's life in Germany, I learned much more about his parents' struggle, including the revocation of Dr. Paul Englaender's dental license in 1933 which took away his livelihood, and the fact that the great-grandparents' home was designated as a *Judenhaus* forcing them to share their home with other Jews in Augsburg. This I had never heard about from my father-in-law... perhaps he chose to share only his positive memories, or that's all he chose to remember.

While viewing the memorial plaques for the Englander grandparents and great-grandparents was heart-wrenching, just being there in front of these majestic buildings where my father-in-law grew up helped to fill in the story of his early life. Learning that the Jewish community numbered slightly more than 1,000 pre-WWII convinced me that all our ancestors knew each other, and if we searched further, I'm certain all 75 on this trip were interconnected a century ago. Our family was just one stunning example of this when we learned that the great-aunt of Leanne Zimmerman was the last person to

see my husband's grandparents alive, and she was entrusted with a gold watch which she dutifully handed over to my father-in-law after the war. That amazing moment and connection will stay with me forever.

But what touched me more than filling in historical facts about the Englander family was the time and effort the city of Augsburg, and primarily the staff at the Jewish museum, took not only to organize the trip but to also research our history in order to share it with all of us. And as we all know, the vast majority of these local historians are not of our faith, yet they felt it important to learn about the Augsburg Jews before WWII and to share it with those whose families experienced it.

Another extraordinary example was during a trip to Ichenhausen when our lovely guide presented cousin Debbie Rausch with a wooden hanger from the shop owned and operated by our ancestors. What a thoughtful and heartfelt gesture for our entire family.

At a time when we in the United States cannot open a newspaper or read the news online without being saddened by yet another act of antisemitism, I will never stop sharing the story of how a group of mostly non-Jewish people became experts in my husband's family's history so that we can continue to tell a more complete story of the beautiful city of Augsburg where my father-in-law was born.



While at the reunion the Heilbronner/Steinfeld descendant cousins made their way into the synagogue and sat in the balcony seats once designated for the women in the family. (Front row L-R) Debbie Sturm Rausch, Jeffrey Englander, Rachel Englander, Steven Felgran, Alise Kreditor and (Back row L-R) Jake and Sam Englander.

From Jacob Englander:

Visiting Augsburg for the second time - more than 30 years after my first visit with my grandfather John Englander - was a profound reminder of the human connection that still exists between my family and its proud German Jewish roots in this city. It is not merely plaques and photographs that document my (and other) family's history in Augsburg; it is the people who have today determined to keep a light shining on our shared history. Among them are Dr. Carmen Reichert and the rest of the wonderful museum staff that care deeply about preserving the historical record of the city's Jewish heritage, including the cultural and commercial impact of our relatives; Mayor Weber, who demonstrated the sociopolitical imperative of continuing to engage with the city's Jewish history through both formal recognition and simple human engagement with the next generations; and Dr. Elisabeth Friedrichs, whose devotion to telling the individual stories of the city's highly accomplished Jewish medical professionals that suffered (and died) at the hands of the Third Reich, my great-grandfather, the dentist Dr. Paul Englaender, among them. It was that walk with her through the city in particular that was the most poignant - to learn, while standing outside the very apartment on Annastrasse where my grandfather spent his formative years, that my great-grandparents were not alone on the night they defied the Nazis' dehumanizing cruelty by departing this world on their own terms. Family members of the friends who helped

my great-grandparents take their own lives to avoid deportation to the camps were standing next to us, substantiating in real time the ongoing human connection to our shared past. It was the type of experience that will leave a lasting impression. Though I did not get to take this trip with my wife or two young daughters, I am already looking forward to introducing them to Augsburg.

From Rachel Englander:

I only confirmed my attendance for the trip a few weeks in advance as I was unsure if I would be able to attend. I truly had no idea what to expect other than that we were going to the birthplace of my grandfather and were going to see where he grew up. It was amazing to me that so many years after our families departed Augsburg and the hundreds and thousands of miles most of us have moved away from the city, we were able to make so many connections nearly 100 years later. The Jewish community wasn't an incredibly large population, but what we didn't have in numbers (and unfortunately those dwindled further), we maintained in our Jewish pride and desire to return to where it all began. It was of course heartbreaking to visit the site where our great-grandparents spent their last days and to see their graves. On the other hand, I was able to envision what their lives must have been like when they were alive and thriving, walking the same streets and seeing many of the same sights. I'm grateful that we had the opportunity to all meet and for all of the people working with the synagogue and Jewish museum who assisted with this reunion. It truly fascinated me how many people were not Jewish and yet dedicated to teaching the public about Jewish history. The experience made me much more proud to highlight my German Jewish roots. I always said that my family's physical strength (not that it's so plentiful) came from our German side; but what is stronger is our unwavering Jewishness, necessity to remain in close contact with our family, and our pride as Jews. I look forward to sharing this opportunity with my offspring when the time is right.



The German side of the family in attendance at the reunion: (L-R) Steven Felgran, Rachel Englander, Debbie Sturm Rausch, Jake Englander, Jeffrey Englander, Sam Englander, and Alise Kreditor

From Samuel Englander:

I was very fortunate to have finally made the trip to Augsburg, more important yet because I went alongside my family. What I had always imagined my grandfather's upbringing to be could not have prepared me for the experience – a true cosmopolitan city with a rich history and so many individuals making it a priority to remember what had taken place more than 90 years ago.

The efforts of the descendants group made the whole experience engaging, memorable, and welcoming. One event that will always stay with me was a tour about medical professionals who were persecuted during the

war. The last stop was at my great-grandparents' apartment, which was particularly special in and of itself. That day, we learned that another descendant's relative had been with my great-grandparents the night they took their own lives and was entrusted with passing on a watch to my grandfather. Miraculously, they were successful in meeting up with my grandfather when he returned as a "Ritchie Boy" to help the U.S. Armed Forces in the liberation of the city and fulfilled the promise made to his father. This story brought everyone to tears, especially when my father and the other descendant, Leanne Zimmerman, embraced when they both learned of this simultaneously. This type of connection could not have been possible without the efforts of the entire community in Augsburg and those of us who still feel a strong connection to our past.

While I will always cherish this experience, I know it will be the first of many visits to Augsburg. I look forward to returning in the near future with my children, so they may also embrace their family's history.

Letter to My Grandma

By Bettina Kaplan, the granddaughter of Ellen Feldberg née Arnold and a descendant of the Arnold and M.S. Landauer families, who resides in California.

Dear Grandma,

You died when I was seven years old, which means there was so much that I could never ask you. What little I knew from your life in Augsburg came from photographs, framed old maps of the city hanging in our house, and stories told by others.

Even my name became part of that inheritance. I learned later in life that Bettina was not only the

middle name you gave to my mother but also the name of your maternal grandmother, Bettina Landauer née Stein. Somehow, without realizing it, I had been carrying a small piece of Augsburg with me all along.

I have just returned from the second descendants' reunion in Augsburg, and I found myself wanting to tell you about it.

I often wonder what it would feel like for you to know that decades after you were forced to leave Germany, other descendants and I would return as guests, researchers, speakers, friends, and family.

There were moments during the reunion week when history suddenly became real. Nathalie Jäger, the archivist at the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia showed me a beautiful large red book embossed with gold writing which was a tribute book to your great-



Ellen Feldberg with her grandchildren, Bettina and Brad, Los Angeles, 1967

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grandfather M.S. Landauer on the occasion of his 80th birthday — a book that somehow survived when so much else did not. Holding something connected to people more closely related to you made the distance between generations feel smaller.

I stood before the remembrance post (*Erinnerungsband*) that we unveiled in front of your family home in 2018 to remember your parents. I also visited the *Erinnerungsbänder* for your uncle Benno and your aunts Anna and Luise, and visited the graves of most of your family. For years their names existed mostly on family trees and documents. In Augsburg, they occupy physical space again.

One of the most meaningful moments was speaking with local teenagers who wanted to learn about our family history. Not because they had to, but because they were curious. Because they cared.

But, what surprised me most was not the history but the people I met.

Descendants came from around the world, each carrying fragments of stories, photographs, and questions. Yet being together created something unexpected: a feeling of family. What began as searching for history became descendants building community.

When I was young, Augsburg was only maps on walls and photographs in frames.

Now it is also voices, faces, streets, memorials, friendships, and conversations.

I wish I could tell you all of this in person.

Mit vielen lieben Grüßen, your granddaughter,
Bettina

From Orkney to Augsburg

*By Miriam Landor, granddaughter of Richard Landauer, a descendant of the M.S. Landauer family. She recently published her memoir **Stumbling Stones: the Holocaust, my family and me**. Miriam lives in Orkney, Scotland.*

Attending the descendants reunion this year was a deeply rewarding experience. Traveling from Orkney, an archipelago in the far north of Scotland, involved many stages but the opportunity to spend time in Augsburg and connect with fellow descendants made every part of the journey worthwhile.

As I learnt my way round this little city - home to textile manufacturer M.S. Landauer and his descendants, my grandfather's family - I fell in love with it. It is small enough to get around on foot and big enough to have a rich and varied culture.

For me the gem of the trip was the guided tour of the grand synagogue, stunning in its design and decor. As I stood beneath its soaring dome and beautiful mosaics, I felt a profound connection to both my family's history and Augsburg's Jewish heritage. Learning about the

synagogue's survival during the Nazi era and its later restoration made the experience even more moving. My grandfather's first cousin, the architect Fritz Landauer, and his Catholic colleague Heinrich Lömpel won a competition to design it, a little over a hundred years ago. They made innovative use of the exciting new material, concrete, enabling them to construct a high dome, inscribed with figurative imagery and a striking green and gold mosaic.

There is a far older, smaller synagogue and a Jewish cemetery in

Kriegshaber, then an outlying village and now a suburb of Augsburg, dating from the time when Jews weren't permitted to live within the city precincts, but more enlightened and prosperous times led to the construction of this new larger synagogue in Augsburg. It heralded a brief era of liberal and community-minded integration: the synagogue choir consisted of men and women, Jews and Catholics; they had a massive organ, which they 'lent' to the local Catholic church in the 1930s to ensure its safety. Both animals and humans were depicted in artistic form throughout the premises. Then came disaster, when Nazis ransacked the building, destroyed the Torahs and other holy artefacts, and set fire to the building; however it was impressed upon the looters that the synagogue was surrounded by properties owned by non-Jewish citizens, in particular a fuel store just across the street, and the flames were doused.

Another source of great pleasure was to be face to face with some other Moses Samuel Landauer descendants, whom I had only met through email previously, and Diane Castiglione (not a Landauer descendant) and Bettina Kaplan (Landauer descendant) of the DJCA. I was also pleased to meet another M.S. Landauer descendant Jeffrey Katz, who coincidentally also recently published his memoir, and his family.



Miriam Landor's teenage grandfather Richard Landauer, publisher-to-be (far left), and his cousins, including Fritz, architect-to-be (third from left), dressed up as their elders at a family wedding, 1896



(L-R) Bettina and her husband Erich with the remembrance band



Descendants of Moses Samuel Landauer at the DJCA Reunion L-R: Bettina Kaplan, Miriam Landor, Benjamin Katz, Emily Katz Sayag, Eitan Sayag, Erich Strohmaier, Mollie and Jeffrey Katz in the courtyard of the synagogue, Augsburg, 2026

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Reunion Sparks Questions

By Julia Rymer Brucker, granddaughter of Richard Michael Rymer (formerly Untermayer). She lives in Littleton, Colorado.

There were a few things that stood out for me after attending the reunion. Some assumptions I had were shown to be false, and I left with some very profound questions!

First, I was astonished to learn that the Jews of Augsburg were fully integrated into the fabric of the greater non-Jewish community. They were not assimilated in the sense of hiding their Jewish identity; rather they lived openly as Jews while participating fully in civic life. Members of the Jewish community owned businesses large and small, and worked as doctors, lawyers, teachers, laborers, and in many other professions. They belonged to local sports clubs and other civic organizations. In fact, the synagogue was partially funded by the town itself, and was co-designed by a non-Jewish architect.

I was also surprised to learn that it was not a "Reform" synagogue, in the sense of the American Reform Jewish movement. Rather, it was a fully-functioning synagogue that welcomed Jews of all levels of observance. It had a mikvah, a women's section, and 25 Torah scrolls. In other words, a vibrant and proud Jewish community, committed both to ritual observance and to embracing Jews of differing practices, was destroyed.

This resulted in a question that has since reverberated through my head: What happened? Why did their non-Jewish neighbors turn on them? What was the moment in which people they had done business with, celebrated with, and walked by every day betrayed them? The answer that ordinary non-Jews, neighbors, could do nothing to help their Jewish fellow citizens astounds me. Yes, non-Jews were at the mercy of a totalitarian government and they too were subject to horrible consequences for resisting it. But that excuse alone does not explain the full picture because it does not clarify how Augsburg's Jewish citizens came to be dehumanized by so many of their neighbors.

For me, it does not fully illuminate the how and the why of the betrayal and the horror that unfolded in the span of only a few years.

Dandelions in the Jewish Cemetery

By Jeremy Gaywood, who lives in London, UK, and is the son of Hannah Gaywood, a member of the Fabian and Guggenheimer families of Augsburg.

I'm an IT professional, aficionado of the theatre, 25 years married and proud father of two wonderful young women. My last visit to Germany was on a school trip to Berlin in September 1989.

I came to the reunion to meet my mother and cousin. A dutiful son, disconnected from the Jewish community where I live, uncertain of how I would experience and be experienced by the attendees. I feel simultaneously trapped in, and disconnected from, our history.

The city was more beautiful than I could imagine.

Everyone was wonderful. I cautiously warmed up as we began our activities, my enjoyment growing by the hour. Soon I thought of returning for another trip or even living there.

It was the visit to the Jewish cemetery to visit the graves of my great-grandparents where it really struck me. Near the end of the visit, overcome with emotion, I was driven to write a poem. A poem would be better than prose. Writing a poem is not something that I have considered once since leaving high school. The idea kept turning in my mind after that day and after I returned to London, I surprised myself by actually sitting down and writing it.

I wrote this for myself as an outlet for the feelings on the day, a time capsule of those emotions that come crashing back every time I look at it or think of it. After I wrote it, I considered sharing it and decided I needed to rewrite it to be good enough. I conceded quickly that I wasn't a poet and that the raw honesty would be better.

Dandelions

*I wander along the cemetery searching an answer
Headstones of my ancestors rooted behind me
The groundskeeper's lawnmower roars, intruding
He does his job and sweeps the cuttings, voices murmur
The stones vary in size shape and design
Many names speak the passage of space and time
Crunching gravel, entranced, I return to the start
Sky is brilliant blue, clouds are light
I am rushed to tear-edged joy by the yellow constellations
Their sunny faces beam at the sky, resolute
In groups, in pairs, apart, but never alone
They are free and will return*

Jeremy Gaywood – April 2026

Grandson of Dr. Rolf Fabian and Elsbeth Fabian (née Guggenheimer)
Great-grandson of Dr. Julius and Gisela Fabian (née Guggenheimer)

Great-grandson of Julius and Anna Guggenheimer (née Brüll)

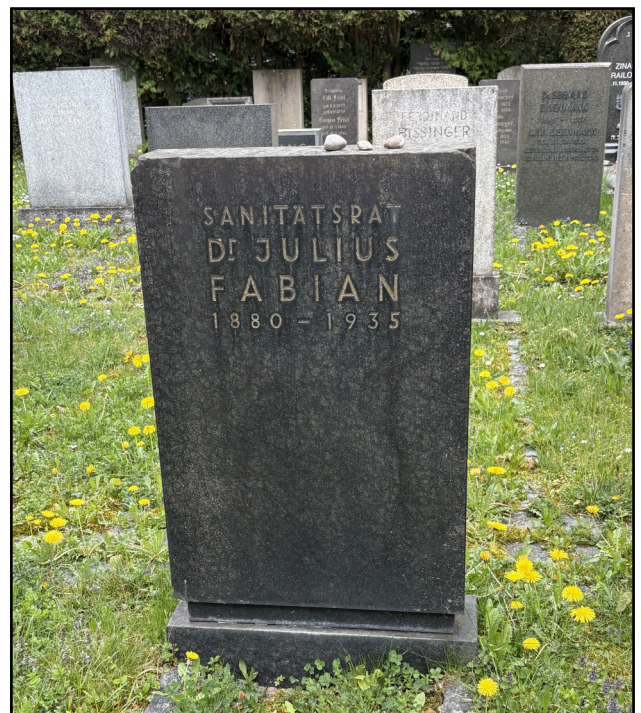


Photo Credit: Jeremy Gaywood

Gravestone of Jeremy's great-grandfather, Julius Fabian, Haunstetterstrasse Jewish Cemetery, Augsburg 2026

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Reflections on visiting Augsburg

By Brigitte Bernheimer, the granddaughter of Louis and Paula Bernheimer, who resides in Paris, France.

It's not the first time I've been to Augsburg.

I first came to Augsburg in 2001 when the names of the former Jewish inhabitants who perished during the Holocaust were placed in the memorial at the *Rathaus* (city hall). A second visit followed in November 2022, when a remembrance post was unveiled in honor of my grandparents at the location where their house once stood. Then, in July 2025, a *Stolperstein* was laid for my great-uncle Sigo Bernheimer.

This year provided an opportunity to discover the old quarter along the canals and to appreciate another facet of Augsburg's rich history. I enjoyed being able to talk with local high school students at the Maria Ward high school.

One particularly moving experience was discovering the house where my great-grandparents had lived in Ichenhausen and from which my grandfather Louis Bernheimer and his brother Alfred Bernheimer left to start a company in Augsburg. My niece Dinah Bernheimer sent you photos of the house and the place where my great-grandfather's business was located (see below).

During the reunion, I had the pleasure of getting to know Bettina Kaplan, with whom I was in correspondence but had never met before. I also had the opportunity to become acquainted with Carmen Reichert, the director of the Jewish Museum of Augsburg. Another memorable encounter was with a fellow descendant, Muriel Spierer-Hertz.

In conclusion, I was pleased to participate in this gathering of the descendants of the Jewish community of Augsburg.

Reflections on visiting Augsburg, Part II

By Dinah Bernheimer, a descendant of the Bernheimer family, who resides in Champigny, France.



(L-R) My aunt Brigitte Bernheimer, me (Dinah), and my cousin Nathalie Wahl Danon in front of the Bernheimer family house and shop, Ichenhausen, 2026

My most intense emotion, thanks to the wonderful research of our guide, was finding the building where my great-great-grandparents lived and sold spirits and tobacco in Ichenhausen. I have returned to France, connected to my roots and full of emotions brimming with joy and life.

Reenactments Preserve Memories in Augsburg

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

First and foremost, I am beyond grateful to the incredible team of people who worked together with us to create such a memorable reunion in Augsburg. Diane, Bettina, and I met with Carmen Reichert, Sarah Schwab, Michael Bernheim, and Wolfgang Poeppel so often in planning the reunion that we really got to know each other. Ultimately, we became more than a team - we became friends. It's absolutely wonderful having actual friends in Augsburg!

It was a magical visit. Being able to meet face-to-face with so many fellow descendants and being able to put faces with names meant so much to all of us. Indeed, as we spent time together, the lines, distance, history, and time between us melted away, and most, if not all, of us felt like we were extended family.

Speaking of extended family, when my father, Walter Sturm, was growing up in Augsburg, his best friend was Erwin Cramer, whom he and all their friends called Bienele. The Cramers and the Sturms were close... like chosen family. Bienele and my Dad often hiked together, and hiking Heiliger Berg ("Holy Mountain"), which rises roughly 720 meters above sea level near Lake Ammersee, became a regular weekend ritual for them. The spot is also the home of Kloster Andechs which happens to be Bavaria's oldest pilgrimage site. In the 1930s, the mountain there became a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts and hikers after the *S-Bahn* expanded and it became easier to get there. They would regularly walk the 5-kilometer wooded trail from Herrsching up to the abbey, and, upon reaching the summit, they were rewarded with world-famous monastic beer and hearty Bavarian food (particularly the *Schweinshaxe* - pig knuckle) served at the monastery's tavern.



My Dad told me stories of their hikes, which I told to Claire and Tom Cramer, and during the reunion we resolved to go there together. We reenacted a photo of the two of them that was taken only months before both were



(L-R) Claire Cramer Jebesen, Tom Cramer, Steven Felgran, and Debbie Sturm Rausch enjoying the same Kloster Andechs offerings as their ancestors.

arrested (separately) by the Gestapo. Sadly, Bielefeld did not make it, but his memory stays alive with us. Together, we enjoyed the same views they saw, and also the beer and food the Cramers' uncle and my father loved.

There were so many special moments that happened because of and during the reunion that it is difficult to choose what to highlight. There was time in the synagogue, the student/descendants session, the Mayor's reception, and special meals together... but I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Tuesday tour. Led by Michael



The remembrance band for Hugo and Lina Steinfeld with the C&A Store sign.

Bernheim and Wolfgang Poeppel, the tour took us to some of the homes of former Jewish residents, including our family home located on the Bahnhofstrasse. Michael gave the tragic history of my great-grandparents Hugo and Lina Steinfeld who chose to end their lives at home rather than being taken prisoner of the Nazis, and the sad similar fate of their daughter Hedwig, who was my grandmother Anna's twin sister. When he finished he turned to me and asked me to speak. My father and I spent many hours in his family home (which was also the location of Wimpfheimer & Co., the

family store that is now the C&A Department Store) and he told me many stories about life there when we visited it together in 1985.

Remarkably, he was able to compartmentalize and thus preserve his love of Augsburg and his happy childhood there despite the fact that the Nazis sent him to Dachau, and despite the loss of much of the family to Hitler. He told stories of wonderful times spent with the family. Oh, how he loved his city. My cousin Steve Felgran, my father's sister Ilse's son, and I walked to the back stoop where his mother and my father once sat and reenacted their photo.



(L-R) Debbie Sturm Rausch and Steve Felgran on the back stoop. Debbie is holding the photo of their parents in the same positions nearly a century ago.

Other incredible moments came when the group traveled to Ichenhausen, about an hour from Augsburg, where our ancestors lived before Jews were permitted to live in Augsburg. We discovered two additional levels to our family tree there! And, my cousin Jeffrey and I



(L-R) Cousins Alise Kreditor, Debbie Sturm Rausch, Steven Felgran, and Jeffrey Englander with the hanger from the Wimpfheimer & Co. store in Ichenhausen.

walked WAY back in the cemetery to find their graves. But, the clear highlight was when the historian presented me with a wooden hanger from the original Wimpfheimer & Company store! It's more than 200 years old and has our great-great-great-great-grandfather's name engraved on it. I will elaborate on Ichenhausen and that whole chapter in the next issue of **Connections**, but I at least *had* to mention it here.

So much to say, so little space. Thank you to my biological and Augsburg family who attended the reunion. Preserving the memories of our family members who once walked the same streets we walked together... being there with you... made a profound difference to me. I shall treasure every moment for as long as I live.

My 2026 DJCA Reunion Remembrance

By Rosemary Mark, daughter of Ralph Dreike (Dreifuss) and granddaughter of former Oberbürgermeister Ludwig Dreifuss, U.S.-appointed mayor of Augsburg (1945-46) after his liberation from Theresienstadt. Rosemary resides in Northern California.

Visiting Augsburg during the reunion was quite different from visits as a child with my father to see my grandmother Amalie Dreifuss. I had also visited with my family in 2010 and in 2019 with my father and sisters, on what was my father's last visit to Augsburg at age 97.

It was meaningful to meet Michael Bernheim, hearing him recall that his grandparents were social friends with my grandparents. We share that our grandparents were in Jewish-Catholic marriages.

Meeting Tom Cramer and his twin sister Claire Jebesen held special meaning because their



(L-R) Michael Bernheim and Rosemary Mark.

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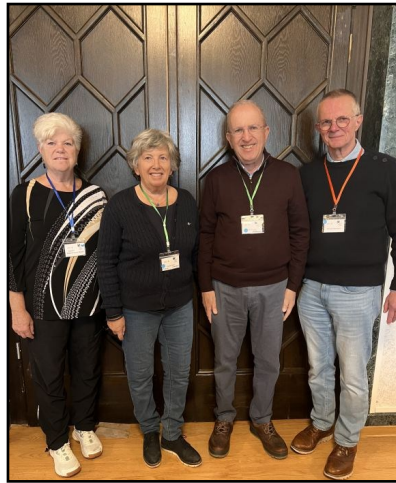
uncle Erwin was a schoolmate whom my dad remembered. I realized this when re-reading the English translated chapter about my father in Gernot Römer's book *In Der Fremde Leben Meine Kinder* where Erwin Cramer was written as Irving. It was like putting names to faces and gave me a more personable feeling of my dad's childhood experience. Erwin was deported from Augsburg with his parents in April 1942 to Piaski. They did not survive.

Participating in the students' dialogue was particularly memorable and solidified for me a statement shared by Michael Bernheim from the late Esther Bejarano, Auschwitz survivor and anti-fascist activist. She emphasized that the generations born after the war are not guilty for what happened in Germany in 1933-1945. But if this generation does not talk about it, they will become guilty if it happens again. I was surprised the two students I met said their parents and grandparents had little knowledge or interest about the Holocaust. Yet as non-Jews, these students are keen to study the history. They asked why I would want to come to a country that "did such terrible things to my ancestors." As Deborah Sturm Rausch helped me articulate for them, it's our feeling of Heimat (a place where you feel at home) in Germany, which we separate from the bad memories. A *Wurst und Bier* at the Stadtmarkt still resonates with our heritage!



Rosemary Mark (center) with students Anna Griesser and Daniel Augustin.

The students' comments on their family's lack of Holocaust history brought to mind a topic in Jeffrey Katz' book *Unsettled Ground*, questioning the outcomes of Germany's remembrance projects. I recall my father, a Holocaust refugee who was sent to California in 1938 at age 15, telling me that on his numerous visits to Germany throughout his life, he would look at strangers



(L-R) Deborah Sturm Rausch, Claire Cramer Jebsen, Tom Cramer, and Michael Bernheim at the reunion.

of a certain age on the streets and wonder, "What were you doing in 1933–1945?" or "What do you remember from the Nazi era?" He probably never actually asked anyone these questions.

My experience at the DJCA reunion reinforced for me that remembrance remains necessary—not because it can fully answer these questions, but because it ensures that future generations continue to ask them.

A particularly fond highlight is learning that Dr. Carmen Reichert, JMAS Director, and Nathalie Jäger, JMAS Archivist, bicycle to work, passing the commemoration dedicated to my grandfather, the Oberbürgermeister Dreifuss Str. street sign, located near the Galeria shopping center.

Many, many thanks to the JMAS team for creating and making this reunion a reality.

Our Hometown?

By Michael Bernheim who is a descendant of the Bernheim and Regenstein families. Michael lives in Augsburg.

The 2026 Descendants Reunion gave me an idea of what it was like having a community of fully integrated Jewish citizens here in Augsburg.

On Sunday evening I met Rosemary Mark, granddaughter of Ludwig Dreifuss, at the Riegele brewery. It was a very special moment for me. The name Dreifuss has been familiar to me from my very early years of life since my parents often mentioned it. They must have known them well.

Another one of these moments was at the reception on Monday evening, when the Lustig family handed Hansi Lustig's friendship book to Carmen Reichert, and we listened to the song "Stars in the Universe." Everybody had tears in their eyes, including Mayor Eva Weber. This was a moment which let us believe that, after all, there can be justice, hope, and peace in this world.



(L-R) Leanne Zimmerman, one of the Lustig family sisters, presents Hansi Lustig's book to Carmen Reichert for placement in the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia.



(L-R) Michael Bernheim and Wolfgang Poeppel at the start of the Tuesday tour.

On Tuesday, Wolfgang Poeppel and I led a small group on a guided tour to homes in Augsburg where victims of National Socialism, Jewish and others,

Theme articles continue on Page 15

formerly lived. I had done this before, but never (except for myself) with people who have a personal relationship to what we showed. In a way, we all were a group of Augsburg citizens walking through their hometown. I should mention that for the last sixteen years I have been living very close to many homes that were formerly Jewish homes. Among the group there was a feeling that everyone was revisiting "our" city. It became almost overwhelming at 18 Bahnhofstrasse at the site of the former Steinfeld home which was also the Wimpfheimer store. I had to fight back tears when I read the biography of Hugo and Lina Steinfeld and their twin daughters Anna and Hedwig. On the other hand, it was pure joy listening to their great-granddaughter, descendant Debbie Rausch telling us about her first visit to this place some forty years earlier when she visited Augsburg for the first time with her father Walter Sturm who, in a way, reconquered his former home.

Another very special time occurred during the student dialogue. My sister Eva and I met with Alex, a sixteen-year-old high school student whose mother is Russian. She has a hard time finding friends here in Germany. Alex speaks German, Russian, and English. Our discussion centered around the term "home country." He said that having no single country to call "home" is hard, but that it also provides the chance of feeling comfortable in several countries or cultures, not unknown to Jewish people. By way of example: our Nathan/Regenstein family was spread from coast to coast and yet was instrumental in making us Bernheims feel at home in the United States.

I am grateful to all of you.

Our Ilse and Howard

By Steven Felgran, who is the son of Ilse Sturm Felgran and a descendant of the Wimpfheimer/Heilbronner/Steinfeld/Sturm family of Augsburg. Steven lives in New York City.

Much has been written in these pages about the Steinfeld and Sturm families, focusing mainly on Hugo and Lina Steinfeld, their twin daughters Anna (my grandmother) and Hedwig, and their descendants.

Motivated by the 2026 Augsburg reunion, I would like to make my own small contribution, by sharing my mother's difficult history.

Anna Steinfeld married Max Sturm and gave birth to three children: Walter, Ilse, and Günter (subsequently George). Ilse, my mother, was born in Augsburg on May 9, 1922. Growing up, she was extremely close with her mother Anna, with whom she shared a strong physical resemblance. My mother spoke often about growing up in Augsburg. Sadly, her description of growing up was

dominated by her remembrances of the Nazi period; she either did not recall or did not choose to share the pleasures of her early years. What I heard was a tale of woe: the abuse from some Christian schoolmates with whom she had been friends before Hitler's rise to power, the abrupt end to her schooldays when Jewish students were barred from the regular education system, her work washing dishes and doing other menial tasks in a Catholic institution, and, more tragically, the arrest of her brother Walter on the morning before Kristallnacht, and his deportation to Dachau after her father had already been arrested; and, later, her father being forced to take down a heavy light fixture in the synagogue while Nazi guards stood watching and mocking him below.

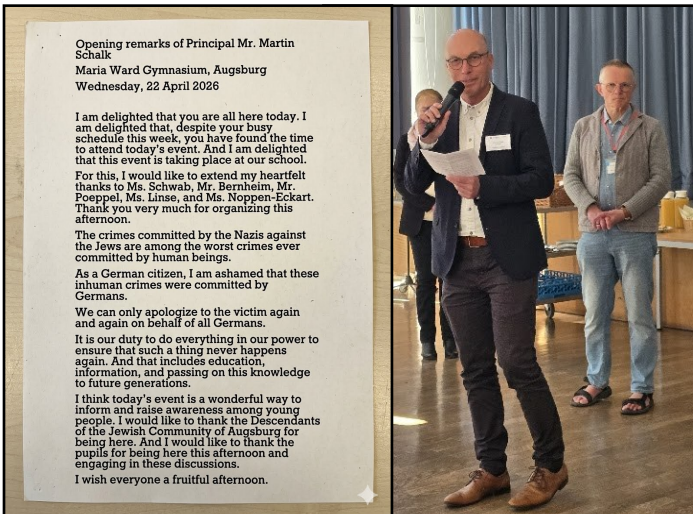
Although her immediate family was ultimately able to get out of Germany, Ilse endured more tragedy later on in America. In particular, her mother, Anna, died suddenly in 1942 at the age of 52 upon receiving the news that her twin sister, Hedwig, had taken her own life in Augsburg along with Hedwig's husband, Paul Englander, and others shortly before their deportation to a concentration camp. My mother's brother Walter was by then at the front as a U.S. soldier and thus unable to be with the family when Anna died. All of this left her shaken and devastated yet again.

My mother could not understand any of it and for the rest of her life wrestled with the insanity of the Holocaust

Ilse Sturm in New York City, 1945.



(L-R) Anna and Hedwig Steinfeld in Augsburg.



Principal Martin Schalk gives opening remarks to students and descendants at Maria Ward Gymnasium. A copy of his poignant remarks appears on the left.



and the years leading up to it. She frequently exhibited the pain of this inner turmoil by stating that she just “did not understand” and “could not understand,” or by posing simple but profound questions starting with “Why...?” She was perpetually seeking some sort of answer or closure to the tragedy but could never achieve it. Some others took note of the trauma and tried to explain; the explanations were never satisfactory.

There was, however, one person who helped to ease her pain: my father, Howard Felgran. Born in Cologne, Germany on September 9, 1913 to Jewish parents Max Felgran (originally from Turkey) and Dora Pottasch Felgran (originally from Gohlis, a district within Leipzig), Heinz (changed to Howard in the United States) arrived in New York City in 1939 at the age of 25. He had studied law in Cologne but, realizing his studies had little value in America, took a job working for a hat manufacturer. Howard held that and similar jobs until he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Following his tour of duty, he joined his father in a garment manufacturing business in the New York area. Coincidentally, my mother’s family had also been in the textile and clothing business in Germany, both in Augsburg and earlier in Ichenhausen - something I learned during the reunion.



Howard and Ilse Felgran, 1950.

Howard Felgran met Ilse Sturm at a German Jewish bungalow colony in the Catskills in 1949. In those days, people did not go to what were, in effect, singles weekends unaccompanied. Accordingly, Howard had gone there with his parents, and Ilse with her brother Walter. Howard and Ilse clicked immediately and were married on December 23, 1949, a mere four months after meeting. I believe their relationship was key to

lifting my mother out of the depression she suffered, enabling her to move forward. Together they set up house in the New York borough of Queens and I, their only child, was born in 1953.

Looking back on these two very different people and their relationship, I see clearly that one of my father’s many gifts was his deep well of patience with my mother. He



(L-R) Steven, Ilse, and Howard Felgran, 1980.

did not attempt to answer the “Why...” questions but in his calm demeanor, his rationality and reasonableness, his unflappable interest in and devotion to her, and his willingness to listen, my father was able to help my mother dial down the frequency and urgency of the

questioning and to accept as much as she could that some questions can never be answered satisfactorily. Although my mother never obtained closure on the issues with which she wrestled, there’s no doubt that she had a better life, one more focused on the present, thanks to my father’s wisdom, presence, and patience.

I have to admit something here: I lack my father’s patience. I could not absorb the negative, troubling information about the past when I was a teenager and a young man. I tuned it out. Interestingly, though, my memories of my parents, both of whom are long gone now, are constant and specific. Ilse is upset, searching, beseeching, and Howard is smiling, reassuring, soothing, almost beatific. He did love her, as he told me on more than one occasion. “She is the love of my life,” he said.



Howard and Ilse Felgran, 1980

Such were the memories I carried with me as I traveled to the reunion of descendants in Augsburg this past April. Traveling throughout the city and to other places such as Ichenhausen during the reunion, hearing of other families’ experiences, sharing special moments such as the Mayor’s reception during which the Lustig family donated the autograph book that also included my uncle George, and spending time there with my cousins Debbie Sturm Rausch and Jeffrey Englander and his family, all brought me a deeper understanding of my mother and the special love she shared with my father, who saved her in so many ways. ❧

Editor’s Note:

Related to the theme articles we received, we are pleased to share a letter from survivor George Sturm, who was unable to travel to the reunion.

To the Descendants:

As one of the few remaining native Augsburgers, I congratulate you on your successful April convocation and salute you for your determination to keep active your family connection to this remarkable venue.

In doing so, I would like also to applaud the City of Augsburg for so graciously acknowledging those who have been drawn back to the place of their ancestors’ birth and lives from generation to generation.

What a wonderful example of personal as well as municipal expression of identity.

George Sturm



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.

The Augsburg Synagogues ~ Highlights of the Reunion Tours

By Frank Schillinger, Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia

This year's reunion program included guided tours of the synagogues in downtown Augsburg and in the Kriegshaber district. For those unable to attend, here is a bit of the history of each.

The synagogue in the center of Augsburg was built between 1913 and 1917. It is considered one of the city's most

outstanding architectural landmarks. This monumental building reflects the turbulent history of the Jewish community: on the one hand, it is an

impressive testament to German-Jewish culture; on the other, it stands as a reminder of the destruction of Jewish life during the Nazi era. The building complex was designed and constructed by architects Fritz Landauer and Dr. Heinrich Lömpel. It combines Byzantine and Oriental-inspired forms with Art Nouveau elements, as



The Augsburg Synagogue interior

well as ideas from the Jewish Renaissance and landscape-oriented architecture. The interior layout follows the Byzantine dome scheme with four cross arms, three of which house the women's galleries, while the fourth contains the Torah ark, the bimah, and the organ loft. The synagogue organ, which is no longer located in the synagogue, reflects the liberal orientation of the congregation over 100 years ago. A distinctive feature of the synagogue is its rich theological iconography, designed by the architects in collaboration with the rabbi at the time, Dr. Richard Grünfeld. Medallions representing Jewish festivals and the Twelve Tribes of Israel, together with reliefs illustrating key themes of Jewish faith, ethics, and tradition, make the building unique among German synagogues of its era. The Jewish community had high hopes for the future of the



The Augsburg Synagogue exterior

new synagogue, but those hopes were shattered by the rise of Nazism. During the November pogroms of 1938, the synagogue was set on fire; the fire was extinguished only because there was a filling station across the street and the Nazis feared an explosion would damage the surrounding houses, which belonged to non-Jews. After that, the synagogue also became a place of persecution. One of the community buildings was used as ghetto housing and the organ was sold (since 1990, a menorah has stood there instead). The synagogue served as a collection point for at least one deportation. After the war ended, the synagogue on Halderstrasse became the center of a new Jewish community.

The Kriegshaber synagogue was established around 1725 in a residential building, with the ground floor continuing to be used as a residence. The origins of the Jewish community on the outskirts of Augsburg date back to the second half of the 16th century. At that time, Kriegshaber belonged to the Margraviate of Burgau in Further Austria. Around the time the synagogue was established, nearly 60 percent of the local population was Jewish. In contrast, Jews were not permitted to live permanently in Augsburg between 1440 and 1803.



The Kriegshaber Synagogue exterior



(L-R) Bettina Kaplan, Diane Castiglione, Monika Müller and others on the Descendants tour inside the Kriegshaber Synagogue

For more than 200 years, the building served as a place of worship and gathering for the local Jewish community. Today it is the oldest surviving synagogue building in Bavarian Swabia as well as one of the few remaining house synagogues in Bavaria. From the outside, the building gives little indication of its function. Only a Star of David and the protrusion of the preserved Torah ark

Ask the Historian continues on Page 18

on the east wall hint at its use. After the synagogue opened in the 18th century, the building underwent several renovations. For example, in the 1860s, as part of liberal reforms, the traditional prayer stands were replaced by rows of benches, and the lectern was reduced in size and moved from the center of the room toward the Torah ark. In 1913, it was renovated one last time, during which the stencil painting on the barrel vaulted ceiling was added.

Kriegshaber and Augsburg became part of the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1806. In the newly created state, the legal framework governing the lives of Jews also changed. Starting in 1861, they were allowed to choose where to live. As a result, many moved from Kriegshaber to Augsburg. One year after Kriegshaber was incorporated into Augsburg in 1916, the Jews from Kriegshaber joined the Jewish community of Augsburg. The synagogue on Ulmerstrasse continued to be used nonetheless.

When the synagogue in the city center could no longer be used following the November pogrom of 1938, the Jews who remained in Augsburg began holding their services in Kriegshaber since that synagogue had not been desecrated. However, the apartment in the synagogue building also became a site of persecution, as the Nazi authorities used it as a ghetto apartment. After the war, the building briefly served as a synagogue again and housed ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training) training workshops for Jewish displaced persons preparing to emigrate. Since 1955, the former Kriegshaber synagogue building has been owned by the city of Augsburg and has served various purposes. Following a complete renovation, it reopened in 2014, as a second location of the Jewish Museum of Augsburg Swabia.

✂

Below, JMAS Director Carmen Reichert gives a tour to descendants gathered in the museum before they headed into the sanctuary.



Augsburg Synagogue Renovations Update

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

On the last morning of the reunion, the descendants were presented with an update about the Augsburg synagogue renovations which were just about to begin. Scaffolding was already in place inside the synagogue, so the group was anxious to hear the plans.

The group met with the Augsburg synagogue leadership team: Mr. Alexander Mazo, who serves as the President and First Chairman of the Israelite Religious Community (IKG) Swabia-Augsburg and Viktoria Kämpf, who has been responsible for managing the renovations. Sarah Schwab from the JMAS staff acted as interpreter for Mr. Mazo.

Mr. Mazo gave greetings from the “new” Augsburg Jewish community. He welcomed everyone saying, “We



(L-R) Viktoria Kämpf, Alexander Mazo, and Sarah Schwab

all belong to the same people.” He informed the group that the renovations were running according to plan, and turned the microphone over to Ms. Kämpf who was able to provide specific information about the renovation. She assured the group that all the current renovations are being done under “strict heritage requirements.” Following a brief history and overview of project plans, which were said

to solely be to clean the interior and shore up any weaknesses in the structure, they took questions. The group asked if the bimah was going to be relocated and both presenters emphatically responded that it will not be moved and will remain in place where it has always been. They also promised that the former children’s choir section would remain in place and that signage could be installed there to identify it.

ATTENTION DESCENDANTS: The leadership stated that small plaques could be placed on the backs of the wooden seats in the women’s balcony to mark the permanent locations of members who attended before the war. If you remember where the women in your family sat, you can provide the location to Ms. Kämpf and she said she will take care of it. To contact Ms. Kämpf, email her at project@ikg-augsburg.com.

Donations can be made to JMAS in support of the renovations for both the synagogue and the museum through the JMAS PayPal link: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=94H23GX2ZGHP.



Family Spotlight

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.

Untermayer Passage Remembered

By Tom Cramer, son of Marianne Cramer née Untermayer and Ernst Cramer, both of Augsburg, and twin brother of Claire Cramer Jebesen. He resides in New York. Claire lives in Norway.

As part of the second descendants gathering, my sister Claire Cramer Jebesen and I unveiled a plaque in what used to be called the Untermayer Passage where our maternal grandparents had their business and where the Untermayer family also lived.

Julia Rymer Brucker, who is the granddaughter of Richard Rymer, one of the Untermayer siblings, participated in the descendants gathering and joined us at the unveiling.



(Above) Tom Cramer and Claire Cramer Jebesen in front of the newly installed plaque at Untermayer Passage. (Below L-R) Julia Rymer Brucker, Tom Cramer, and Claire Cramer Jebesen at the dedication. (Right) The wording on the plaque now affixed to the wall at the Passage



We were especially honored to welcome the family of the Untermayers' last housekeeper, Cenzi, who worked for the Untermayer family until they emigrated to the United States. Our

family had contact with Cenzi again right after the war, and maintained that contact with her daughter Gertrud, Gertrud's husband Josef Vogt, and their son Thomas. All three of them came to the unveiling.

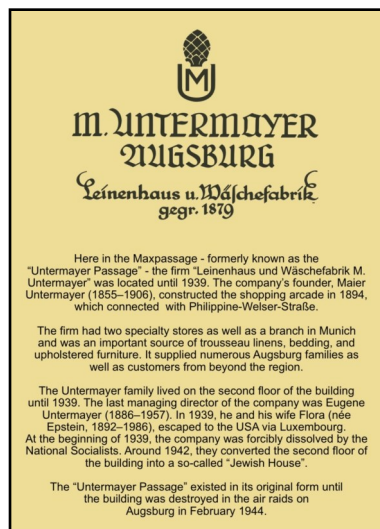
Angela Bachmair, who has done lots of research on the former Jewish community of Augsburg, wrote an article that covered the unveiling in the local paper:

"...Few people traversing the Max-Passage—located between Maximilianstrasse and Philippine-Welser-Strasse - - likely still know that this urban thoroughfare, in existence since 1894, was once called the Untermayer-Passage, named after the business established there: "Leinenhaus und Wäschefabrik M. Untermayer" (M. Untermayer Linen House and Lingerie Factory). Customers from Augsburg and beyond purchased trousseau linens, bedding, and upholstered furniture there, as well as at a second specialty shop; founded in the 19th century by Maier Untermayer, the firm was considered a premier destination. But then, everything changed.

The Jewish family who owned the business lived in an apartment above the shop until 1939 at which point Eugen Untermayer, his wife Flora, and their three

children - - Richard, Hannah, and Marianne - - managed to escape the Hitler regime. The Nazi authorities - - who had imprisoned Eugen Untermayer and his son Richard at the Dachau concentration camp following the November Pogroms of 1938 - - forcibly liquidated the business; on the second floor of the

building, they established a ghetto-like collective housing unit, which they designated a *Judenhaus* (Jewish House). The building was destroyed during Allied air raids on Augsburg in February 1944; the current Max-Passage is a modern reconstruction. And there, on that very spot, now hangs the plaque commemorating the history of the building and the Untermayer



family. Tom Cramer and Claire Jebesen installed it during their visit to Augsburg for the gathering of descendants of Jewish families from the city. Tom Cramer and Claire Jebesen are the children of Marianne Untermayer and her husband, Ernst Cramer - - himself a scion of a Jewish family from Augsburg, commemorated by a memorial plaque at Prinzregentenstrasse 9." ❄



Some of the crowd gathered for the dedication of Untermayer Passage

Editor's Note: the German "ß" in the quoted paragraphs has been changed to a double "s" to conform with **Connections** style guide.

The Cramer Fundraiser

By Tom Cramer

I was able to sell 48 coasters I had made of the Augsburg sewage cover photo to participants of our descendants gathering, raising approximately 480 Euros for JMAs. Thanks to all of you who supported this fundraising project! ❄





EWA Update

Augsburg's [Erinnerungswerkstatt](#) (Remembrance Working Group) is a registered association whose goal is to research the biographies of Augsburg victims of National Socialism to preserve history and to keep their memory alive.

Erinnerungswerkstatt and the 2026 Reunion

By Michael Bernheim, descendant of the Bernheim and Nathan families. Michael lives in Augsburg.

The Augsburg *Erinnerungswerkstatt* (Remembrance Working Group) is grateful and a little proud that its work could contribute to the successful DJCA Reunion. Members of the *Erinnerungswerkstatt* had prepared, contributed, and actively participated in the following activities:



Michael Bernheim, EWA Second Chair, leads a guided tour for descendants during the reunion

- The guided tour: "Path of Remembrance – From Town Hall to Prinzregentenstrasse"
- The guided tour: "Places of Residence and Work of Jewish and Politically Persecuted Medical Doctors from Augsburg during the Nazi Era"
- The introduction of the "Remembrance Initiatives in Augsburg" accompanied by the film "**Set an Example**"
- The unveiling of a memorial for the Jewish residents of the house at 5½ Mozartstrasse
- The descendant/student dialogue

These contributions could not have been possible without a solid foundation laid in recent years: the online memorial book, the memorials placed in front of Nazi victims' former places of residence, biographical research (conducted also with

high school students), and good contacts with descendants of victims of the political opponents group, including the filmmaker Josef Pröll.

Participating in the 2026 Reunion was greatly rewarding. It provided the opportunity to meet descendants of former Augsburgers from all over the world, thereby receiving a glimpse into the past and a sense of what Augsburg may have looked like a century ago.

Thank you, descendants! ☘



Descendant/student dialogue during the reunion

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!

Wolfgang Poeppel Named EWA Chair

Wolfgang Poeppel has been named First Chair of the EWA. Well-known as a dedicated regional historian and educator in Augsburg, he has been an ongoing



Wolfgang Poeppel

advocate and supporter of the DJCA and the Jewish Museum Augsburg Swabia. His steadfast focus is on uncovering local history, combating fascism, and preserving the memory of the victims of National Socialism.

Poeppel is a long-standing core member of the Augsburg EWA. Before serving as the First Chair, he managed the organization's finances as its treasurer. His ongoing contributions include, but are not limited to:

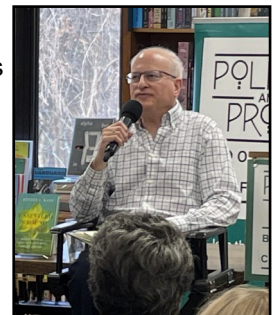
- **Historical Research:** Investigating and writing detailed biographies for the city's digital *Gedenkbuch* (Memorial Book) to document the lives of Augsburg citizens persecuted by the Nazi regime.
- **Educational Guided Tours:** Leading specialized public tours throughout Augsburg's city center that guide citizens to specific sites to analyze the architecture and history of both the victims and local perpetrators of the Nazi era.
- **Community Memorial Projects:** Coordinating the installation of *Erinnerungszeichen* (memorial markers and plaques) across the city to create decentralized places of remembrance.



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

For me, Jeffrey Katz is not only a fellow descendant but a Maryland neighbor. I have attended two of his recent talks about his new book, **Unsettled Ground**. The first was in March at a local, well-respected bookstore in Washington, D.C. The second was in April at my synagogue, just a week before the reunion. That one was also attended by fellow descendant and Maryland neighbor, Janice Balin. It was a nice way to jump-start the reunion! ☘

Submitted by Diane Castiglione



Jeffrey Katz, Washington, D.C., 2026

**NEXT
ISSUE** *Coming in December 2026...*
**Origins of the Jewish
Community of Augsburg**

The theme for our next issue of **Connections** is: **Origins of the Jewish Community of Augsburg.**

As Jews were not permitted to live permanently in Augsburg between 1440 and 1803, many lived in surrounding rural communities, often traveling into Augsburg to conduct business. Among these communities were Bittenwiesen, Fischach, Hürben, Ichenhausen, Kriegshaber, and Krumbach.

Where did your families reside, and what were their lives like there? When, and under what circumstances, did they move to Augsburg? How did their lives change once they moved to Augsburg? Have you visited any of these communities? How do you feel about your ancestors' former home? Does it hold any meaning for you?

We invite you to share the pre-Augsburg stories about your families and help us explore the many paths that led to the formation of Augsburg's Jewish community.

Please send your submissions, memories, and family photos **by October 15, 2026**, to djcaugsburg@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing about your families' experiences in these rural villages and how they made their way to Augsburg!

Thank you. ☿

