



Stammbaum

JOURNAL OF GERMAN-JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

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Stammbaum 26 continues with parts two and three of the three-part series of articles authored by Ernest Kallmann on the consequences of the Nazi racist theory and its effect on the practice of genealogy in Germany. This historical review provides the contemporary researcher with a better understanding of what transpired in Germany during the period of National Socialism and its impact on Jewish family records essential to genealogical investigations. The good news is that many relevant documents survived this horrific period in our history, providing genuine optimism with respect to finding vital information concerning our personal ancestry.

Success stories in finding ancestral ties in Germany are illustrated in three stories that appear in this issue. Author Adam Yamey demonstrates his analytical skills in ferreting out a complete family history from fragmentary pieces of information gathered from widespread sources in Germany, in the United States and in Australia. Another example of genealogical detective work is shown in the article by Emily Rose, where family connections are discovered through the power of “village” networking. The third article is by Rebecca Rector and relates a story that seems to be becoming ever more common: the accidental discovery of Jewish ancestry in contemporary Christian families. The search for such a Jewish connection presents some additional hurdles for the inquisitive researcher.

A different type of research is reflected in the work of Daniel Loeb. He has used the Internet as a tool for publishing a deep penetration into his family history and has invited other researchers to enhance his work with their contributions of connecting data. By showing these sources through hyperlinks on his web pages, Loeb has created a virtual family tree linking Ashkenazic and Sephardic families.

This issue is rounded out by Edward Brandt, who describes a specialized periodical that may yield data of interest to the Jewish genealogist. We also recognize the 300th anniversary of the death of the well known Hoffaktor and Court Jew Samuel Oppenheimer in an article written by one of his descendants, Peter Stein.

We include two of our repeating columns: *Topics and Events* compiled by George Arnstein and *Book Reviews* by readers and members of our Advisory Committee.

In a final note, I continue to welcome contributions from all our readers and friends of *Stammbaum*. Please see our website [www.jewishgen.org/stammbaum] for submission information.

— WERNER L. FRANK, EDITOR

ON THE COVER: Samuel Oppenheimer (1630-1703), discussed in essays beginning on page 22 and 28.
Courtesy Bildarchiv der Oesterreichischen Nationalbibliothek.

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THE RACIST OBSESSION OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS AND ITS IMPACT ON GERMAN-JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

PART II: INSTITUTIONALIZING NAZI GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF A RACIST PROGRAM: THE REICHSSIPPENAMT

BY ERNEST KALLMANN

The principal source for the information contained in this article on the *Reichssippenamt* is Diana Schulle's Ph.D. thesis, published as a book in 2001.¹ It contains a wealth of information on the *Reichssippenamt*, which is only briefly outlined in this article. This work is of special interest for Jewish genealogists since it describes how information relating to Jews (and others) was collected. Schulle's book is also unusual in that she had the opportunity, in 1994, to interview then 92-year-old Achim Gercke, who was central to German racist genealogical activity in the 1930s.

Gercke became involved in his own family's genealogy while studying chemistry, and became interested in the Jewish influence on the social environment, especially within the faculty of his university. He was openly anti-Semitic and racist, founding the "Archive for Professional Racial Statistics — German Information Office,"² which published brochures, one per faculty, about the genealogical (Jewish) origin of the professors and from this derived statistical tables. He also generated card files containing all the information that he gathered.

He joined the Nazi Party in 1926. In 1931, the Party tried to access Gercke's card files in order to settle certain internal Party conflicts, then offered him the opportunity to transform his society into the "Information Office of the National Party Leader."⁴ This Information Office was launched in January 1932; at that time, the card file included some 400,000 named records.

On 7 April 1933, two weeks after obtaining unrestricted power, the Nazis promulgated the Law to Restore the Civil Service, according to which each civil service officer had to document his racial purity. Researching one's ancestors became a national endeavor. Gercke saw an opportunity to climb one additional step. He got in touch with Rudolf Hess, the Führer's deputy, and suggested creating an Institute for Research of the National Ethos [*Institut für Volkstums-Forschung*] beginning with the contribution of his card file, whose main function would be to respond to controversial or touchy Aryan-related questions within the ranks of the Party. It would also collect all documents about the Jewish population and photocopy the Church's vital registers. Gercke was an efficient planner regarding the organization of the Institute, its staff and operations, and its budget.

The suggestion materialized in a slightly different form. During the same month, Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior, created the office of the "Expert in Race Research of the Ministry" under Gercke. Its mission was to determine, with the Minister's approval, whether a government official was an Aryan if attempts to settle this question failed at subordinate levels. Gercke organized his office into three departments: control of the activities of individual genealogists as well as genealogy societies, preservation of documentary heritage (photocopying records and filing

Parts II and III of this article serve as the continuation and conclusion of the author's discussion of the rise of racism in Germany, showing its influence on genealogy, eugenic theories based on a biased use of genetics, and Teutonic myths. Part I appeared in *Stammbaum* 25, Summer 2004.

The National Socialist Party carefully prepared for its accession to power, drafting a law on German citizenship to be issued as early as was possible. Gercke's advice was requested, and he answered with a counter-project, about "race separation" [*Rassenscheidungsgesetz*], which openly aimed to exclude Jews from the national community. The project described what would happen to Jews legally, economically and socially for a period until 1941, at which time Germany would be free of Jews.³

Gercke envisioned the founding of a national Jewish homeland, wherever that might be. His plan was scheduled along staged phases, taking into account the likely reaction to these measures by foreign public opinion as well as the use of the Jewish assets to benefit the Reich. The Nazis may not have copied Gercke, and he probably was not the only one to ponder the Jewish question; nevertheless the similarity between Gercke's plan and what really happened is incredible.

In 1934, Gercke, in the presence of the Minister of the Interior, disclosed to Hitler his plan to get rid of the Jews, self-financed by the forced contribution of the rich Jews who wished to emigrate. Hitler rejected the suggestion at that time: "in case of war, I need the Jews."

their content), and preparation of racial reports for the attention of the Minister.

The card file grew rapidly as his office received copies of all applications for Party membership and reports on political meetings. The staff soon reached 60 to 70 persons. Gercke's personal image benefited from the Aryan research that he conducted, especially when the person being examined was a high-ranking Party executive such as, for example, Reinhard Heydrich.

The Nazis were obsessed with getting a file on everybody with the objective of identifying one single ethnic group, thus creating a family tree of the German people. Gercke obtained the agreement of the Dresden Genealogy Society⁵ to transfer to Berlin its ASTAKA file [*Ahnenstammkartei* — Lineage Index card file] initiated in 1921. The ASTAKA provided a wealth of information concerning the 1650-1750 period, thus complementing Gercke's file that went back to 1800 or somewhat earlier. The two files were incompatible and thus were maintained separately, with the ASTAKA eventually returned to Dresden in 1939 because of financial problems.

NORMALIZATION [GLEICHSCHALTUNG] AND LEADER PRINCIPLE [FÜHRERPRINZIP]

The two Nazi doctrines of Normalization and Leader Principle required that every individual, structure or thought be connected to the Nazi hierarchy. Removing from public service the Jews, who by definition could not conform to Nazi ideology, was a direct application of these dicta.

Three examples of Normalization and adherence to the Leader Principle are shown with respect to genealogists and their societies, registry offices and churches.

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE GENEALOGISTS

Many genealogists were eager to follow Gercke in his idea of "normalizing" all genealogical activity, thereby gaining public recognition that they were in support of National Socialist aims. Conflicts ensued since individual attempts were made to create "racial centers" to deliver Aryan certificates. Gercke was obliged to remind these zealots on several occasions that he was the only one empowered to deliver such documents or delegate their preparation.

In January 1934, Gercke was offered the chair of the National Federation for Ethnic and Vital Recording Research [*Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für Sippenkunde und Personenstandswesen*], which encompassed associations of registrars as well as local or specialized genealogical societies. The plan, as developed during a preparatory discussion in September 1933, was to form a National Union for Genealogy and Heraldry [*Reichsverein für Sippenforschung und Wappenkunde*]⁶ that would include the National Federation as well as three major German genealogical societies. The managing directors of these societies would become the heads of the heraldry, genealogical bibliography and business management units of the Union.

Three days before the formal founding of the Union, the leader of the *Leipzig Zentralstelle*, the most important of the three societies, disagreed with the interpretation of the notes of the September meeting. The most criticized point was the implementation of the *Führerprinzip*. By virtue of the *Führerprinzip*, Gercke nominated the officers of the Union, represented the Union vis-à-vis third parties, called all the meetings and set their agenda. He approved direct membership at Union level, a first sign of forthcoming total Normalization. Eventually, the *Zentralstelle* and the *Der Herold* (Berlin), the two most important societies, did not take part in the Union.

In spite of these disagreements, some 2,000 societies and as many individual genealogists became part of the Union by March 1935, probably joining in order to preserve their own future within an activity-promising organization.

THE RAID ON THE REGISTRY OFFICES⁷

Starting with the first laws concerning civil registration dating back to 1875-76, the registrars had tried to establish identical procedures all over Germany. For that purpose, they had set up very early associations to strengthen their impact. In 1921, their two competing trade publications merged to create the *Journal of the Registrar's Function* [*Zeitschrift für Standesamtswesen*]. The

registrars established links with genetic biologists, stressing that they had access to the data needed to define kinfolk. Similarly, they approached genealogists, especially after 1933. In 1934, Edwin Krutina, National Director of the Registry, feared that his administration would be “normalized,” i.e. included within the General Administration. He therefore offered Gercke the presidency of the Union of German Registrars, preferring to be normalized by someone he knew, rather than by a total stranger.

The general meeting of the Union relinquished full power to its new president. This would normalize the registrars but would not resolve their conflicts with the genealogists. The main area of friction was whether the registrars or the genealogists were entitled to certify pedigrees.

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE CHURCHES

After the 1933 Race Laws, the churches experienced an influx of people investigating Church registers.⁸ The sudden increase in inspections, often by persons who were careless with the registers, led to regulations that governed access to church registers. Generally, the parishes accepted the extra workload; some even photocopied the registers, despite the additional costs that burdened parish budgets. Gercke appeared to want to maintain the parish registers on a centralized basis, raising the question of who was the legal owner of these registers.

Gercke’s aims were to create a central *Reichssippenamt*. In his mind, a first step was to set up ethnic chanceries [*Sippenkanzleien*]. These were to be offices within or near ecclesiastic locations, in charge of genealogy research for racial purposes, especially to certify the content of Aryan pedigrees. If personnel belonging to the Church were unavailable, certified genealogists would operate the chanceries. The chancery directors, irrespective of their origin, would report to Gercke.

THE CENTRAL FILE OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE

For the central file, Gercke conceived of one card per family, similar to the family group report [*Familienregister*], already in use in certain *Länder* [states]⁹ and in Switzerland. It would list the individual, his/her spouse, parents and children, with the places and dates of birth, marriage and death. The cards would be kept and updated in the place of residence.¹⁰ In addition to these vital data, the card would contain information about the individual’s physical condition (diseases, handicaps) and forensic, police and political information; in short, a full, personal vita. This card would also be available to trace the spouse’s ancestors; therefore, a copy would be kept in the place of marriage. A second copy would go to a central Ethnic National File [*Reichssippenkartei*]. With such a tool it would be possible to do in-depth checking of the origin and the Aryan status of individuals and would facilitate identifying families with physical or social (offender) handicaps. The complexities involved in maintaining such a card file would impose enormous obligations upon registry offices, churches and courts. At the same time, the church registers would be declared “historical scriptural documents,” leading to the production of photocopies in order to protect the original records.

In order to achieve this colossal mission, a new operating organ would be created, the National Ethnic Office, *Reichssippenamt* (RSA). The name had first been used in writings at the end of the 19th century. The RSA was, however, founded years later and under different circumstances.

THE END OF AN AMBITION

Hitler had been in power for less than two years when Gercke reached his target of dominance in areas of racial programs. His rapid ascent bred opposition and jealousy, which showed up through insinuation and slander, as is normal in a totalitarian regime. Now came Gercke’s undoing.

In February 1934, Gercke gave a lecture to the civil recording employees in Würzburg at the start of a training session on race research. He had known the Director of the Recording Office for seven years and invited him and his companion, Albert Becker, to a theater performance. Since the director could not go, only Becker went with Gercke to the theater.

In 1933, Germany was still a mosaic of provinces that had originated from kingdoms and fiefdoms that became the Empire after 1870. The various regions retained their individuality even during the Weimar Republic. A primary concern of the Nazis was to “normalize” the regions. *Gleichschaltung* literally meant to establish compatibility and comparability between political units so that they would all “dance to the same drummer,” aligned politically, culturally and economically.

In addition, the Leader principle was basic to Nazism. It implied unconditional allegiance to the Leader, the supreme Leader being Adolf Hitler. As the Führer, Hitler could not do anything personally; he delegated power to leaders of subordinate rank, and so forth. At each level, the leader was omnipotent and reported only to his immediate leader. This structure could only operate on the confidence that each leader granted to his subordinate leader(s).

1 Schulle, Diane, *Das Reichssippenamt: eine Institution nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik* [The RSA: an instrument of Nazi racial politics], Logos Verlag, Berlin 2001.

2 *Archiv für berufstätige Rassenstatistik — Deutsche Auskunftei*.

3 The Machiavellian scenario of the Nazi anti-Jewish action has always amazed me. Evidence strongly indicates that the plan had been generally completed even before the Nazis took power.

4 *Auskunft bei der NS Reichsleitung der NSDAP.*

5 *Deutsche Ahnengemeinschaft Dresden*; in short, D.A.

6 *Familie* is no longer used; the only words used are *Sippe* and *Rasse*.

7 Since 1876, all vital events of all residents (birth, marriage, divorce, change of name, death) had to be recorded by government registry offices.

8 Prior to 1876, vital event registrations of Christians were collected by the local churches. From approximately 1810 to 1875 this procedure often included Jews in a separate register.

9 In particular, the German locations on the left bank of the Rhine. Starting in 1798, France annexed the left bank and introduced civil registration for all residents without regard to religion. Each year, an alphabetically sorted table for each event (Birth, Marriage, Death) was set up. Every ten years these annual tables were merged, thus providing an efficient research tool for present day genealogists (a procedure still in use today in France). After the end of the French annexation of German regions, the civil registration was kept

Some months later, Hitler eliminated his possible rival Ernst Röhm, chief of the SA, during the Night of Long Knives. Röhm's homosexuality became one of the pretexts for the massacre. The hunt on gays was unleashed. During inquiries into the gay community, Gercke's address was found in Becker's address book. This was enough evidence in early 1935 for Gercke's immediate dismissal, excluding him from the Party and prohibiting him from any job for four years. Gercke was induced to sell his card file to the Reich, for a price set by an expert and he apparently agreed to participate in covering up what happened.

In the meantime, another player had entered the scene. In early 1931, the SS created an Office of Race and Settlement [*Rasse- und Siedlungsamt*],¹¹ to check the racial purity of its members and their families, via the prerequisite of an authorization for marriage. Kurt Mayer, a Party member since 1923, joined the Race and Settlement Office and stepwise rose to ever more important positions. He also belonged to the Berlin genealogical society, *Der Herold*. This organization faced termination after having refused to join the *Reichsverein* and, to avoid this, elected Mayer as its president in 1934.

THE CREATION OF THE REICHSSIPPENAMT

Upon Gercke's expulsion in 1935, Mayer took his position in the National Ethnic Office [*Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung*], the new name of the Office of the Expert in Race Research. He quickly got rid of those close or faithful to his predecessor. The office was structured according to its missions: the research and certification of Aryans, the protection of genealogical sources and the building of files. Mayer was appointed chief of the NSDAP Office for Family Research [*Amt für Sippenforschung der NSDAP*], responsible for establishing the Aryan status of Party members.

The two offices were housed in the same rooms, using the same source material and Mayer managed both. Financing originated partly from the Ministry of Interior and partly from the Party. Frictions arose about the allocation of funds and execution of the plans, such conflicts being typical internal problems in Nazi Germany.

Producing Aryan certificates and answering urgent requests was the principal task. Nevertheless, the delays and the backlog of dockets waiting to be processed increased. In 1939, the examination of public service managers had not been completed, while the review of lower ranking employees had not yet started.

A part of the staff in charge of creating the card file had been transferred to assist in reducing the backlog of Aryan certificates. Consequently, the card file did not progress as fast as planned, which in turn slowed down the research of data for the Aryan certificates. The dream of a central file of all Germans progressively vanished and the office turned more and more to just responding to applicants seeking Aryan certificates, including aliens [*Fremdstämmige*].¹²

In 1936, the number of church registers that needed to be photocopied was estimated to be 350,000 to 500,000 volumes, which would require some 200 million images. This would have required 80 photo units to absorb the load over 20 years. In 1938, only six such units were actually available, one for Jewish records, three for the civil records in the border regions of Germany and only two for the church registers.¹³ The parish registers for the pre-1800 period were especially interesting because they contained the baptisms of converted Jews. Since neophytes took a new name at the time of baptism, the connection with his/her Jewish ancestors was concealed and the descendants believed that they were pure Aryans.

Mayer soon embraced the ambitious plan imagined by Gercke. His final objective was to set up the RSA, reporting directly to the Minister of the Interior, a way to assure the ascent of its chief (i.e. Mayer) to the top of Nazi power. In order to achieve this, a legal framework was required, the Law of Ethnic Offices, *Sippenamtsgesetz*. These offices would be established on three hierarchical levels, each in charge of the civil and ecclesiastic recording of vital statistics, the racial genealogical administration (ancestor research, biogenetic research,¹⁴ delivering Aryan certificates), and the preservation of the records (photocopy, archival preservation of originals).

Some of the responsibilities of these offices still reported to authorities different from the Ministry of the Interior or the Nazi Party, the two organs to which Mayer owed his allegiance. The Ministries of Justice and of Health, the National Archives, the genealogical societies, and the churches started to oppose the establishment of these offices, initially at a low-key level. Mayer's aggressive personality made things worse. Combat continued through 1937. At that time, everybody was convinced that the *Sippenamtsgesetz* was due to be established and the only question was when.

Basic problems appeared, especially after the Nürnberg Racial Laws. The first law¹⁵ transformed the Jews into nationals deprived of their civil rights and thus subjected to separate legislation. The second law¹⁶ ruled on matrimonial and sexual relations, in order to protect the purity of the race. If there were Jews among the ancestors of a German, this person would either be considered Aryan or not according to the generation and sex of his/her Jewish ancestors, and would thereby receive or be denied permission to marry an Aryan.

The organization of the civil registry functions also had to be thoroughly reconsidered. Would the new law on civil registry, which had been in the works since the Nürnberg Laws, become a section of the *Sippenamtsgesetz*?

The suspense ended with an unexpected decision. On 23 February 1937 the Führer made his will known through the Ministry of Propaganda; he opposed the transformation of the Registry Offices into Ethnic Offices. The Registry Office would continue recording the vital events of all residents, while the Ethnic Offices would limit themselves to researching and preserving the purity of families of German blood. The three units of *Sippenämter* would not be created. Even the word *Sippenamt* and its derivations were to be abandoned. As a minor comfort, four years later, in November 1941, the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung* would be renamed *Reichssippenamt*, its field of action remaining unchanged. Gercke's plan, taken up by Mayer, was thus "buried irrevocably" by the Führer's will.

A REICHSSIPPENAMT ON A SCANTY DIET

Mayer's ambition was now limited. The preparation for war added other constraints since material had to be used sparingly and Mayer's activity required huge quantities of paper, a scarce commodity. The *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, the takeover of Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia in 1939, and the annexation of once German territories (West Prussia) increased the population that had to be scrutinized. At the same time, the military draft thinned the ranks of Mayer's staff.

Mayer now began traveling within Germany and to the East, spreading the rumor that the *Sippenamtsgesetz* was only postponed given the circumstances, and that after the war it would be promulgated. His listeners would be wise to set up the structures that would be needed. He offered his assistance for that goal. Curiously, the advice was followed, and *Sippenämter* were created at various levels by the local "autonomous" authorities of the new provinces and even later on in the *Altreich*.¹⁷ The story about the various conflicts among different levels within the Government, the Party and the S.S.¹⁸ is very complex and will not be detailed here, except as it relates to the major German-Jewish institutions.

As early as 1935, the Nazis had envisioned forcing Jews to take specific names. Finally, in August 1938, an approved list of 185 male and 91 female given names was issued, names mostly found in the Bible. This measure became obsolete shortly thereafter, when Jews were obligated to adopt an additional compulsory given name, Israel or Sara. After the Night of Broken Glass [*Kristallnacht*] the Gestapo seized all Jewish documents except strictly religious ones. Mayer convinced Himmler, chief of the S.S., that all civil records and documents of genealogical interest should be centralized in Berlin and Vienna "so as to assist the security services in their surveillance work." He agreed with the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), the Central Security Office of the Reich, that these documents should be stored in the premises of the Central Archive of the German Jews, the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*. These archives were located in the Berlin

unchanged, and the annual and ten-year tables were replaced by family registers.

10 Germany requires that every person involved register with the police when moving; also, a yearly update of the population's residence lists had been in use in certain areas.

11 Entitled *Rasse — und Siedlungshauptamt* [RuSHA] after 30 January 1935. *Siedlung*, i.e. settlement, is a Nazi leitmotiv. In the governing ideology, the German is characterized both by his closeness to the earth and his belonging to the Aryan race. In parallel with the Law on the Civil Servants, the Reich issued a Law on "perpetual tenure farms" [*Reichserbhofgesetz*]. In short, agricultural land was rented to a family that cultivated it as one single farm. As long as the land was worked uninterrupted, from generation to generation, the estate is prevented from being seized and mortgaged. The objective is to avoid splitting up land and mitigate migration to the cities, as well as to reinforce the feeling that the peasant belongs to a "noble" subset of the people.

12 Basically, this referred to Jews. The Gypsies, another unwelcome category, were probably neglected because they had rarely intermarried with Germans. On the opposite end, the Huguenots (Calvinists) emigrated from France after the repeal of the *Nantes Edict*, and were considered Aryans; they founded families that held

important positions in the economy, the armies and the governing circles.

13 In July 1938, 2.6 million pictures had already been taken. The filming activity lasted until shortly before the very end of fighting, in April 1945.

14 When genealogy reached a dead-end, e.g. for an extramarital birth where the father could not be identified, the Ministry of Health had a check made based on photos of the individual, to assess if he had Jewish “race characteristics.” A table of some 130 such characteristics had been set up. These pseudo-scientific checks generally led to ambiguous results. The report being inconclusive, the decision was left at the political level.

15 *Reichsbürgergesetz* (RGB), Law on the Citizenship of the Reich.

16 *Gesetz zum Schutz des deutschen Bluts und der deutschen Ehre* (*Blutschutzgesetz*), Law for the Preservation of German Blood and Honor.

17 *Altreich*, the “old” Reich within its 1933 borders.

18 Diana Schulle has suggested that at this time the Nazi system was already disintegrating internally due to the increasing complexity of the structures as well as external constraints.

19 Jacob Jacobson survived the war after having been interned in Theresienstadt.

Jewish Community Center, next door to the New Synagogue on *Oranienburgerstrasse*. The Gestapo had just seized the library of the center and room was made available.

The *Gesamtarchiv* was expected to continue to serve the Jewish community for all formalities of its members, especially their emigration transactions. Mayer transferred personnel to *Oranienburgerstrasse*, in order to be next to the files and documents of the *Gesamtarchiv*. Subsequently, Mayer confiscated the whole *Gesamtarchiv* whose director, Jacob Jacobson, remained in his position.¹⁹

The last step for Mayer was to control the files of the National Union of Jews in Germany, *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. Under the directives of the Gestapo, the Union had a monopoly on social assistance and help for emigration of the Jews, and subsequently the establishment of deportation lists according to residential zones. When the former premises of the RSA were partly bombed, most of the staff was transferred to the *Oranienburgerstrasse* facilities. Although bombs demolished the New Synagogue, the Community Center escaped destruction.

The German capitulation in May 1945 put an end to the existence of the RSA and to Mayer’s ambitious dreams. On 8 June 1945, he committed suicide with his four children. His wife, who apparently failed in her initial suicide attempt, was arrested and put in prison where she ultimately also committed suicide.

THE RACIST OBSESSION OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS AND ITS IMPACT ON GERMAN-JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

PART III: IMPACT OF THE REICHSSIPENAMT'S OPERATION ON PRESENT GERMAN-JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

BY ERNEST KALLMANN

During World War II, bombing destroyed innumerable records in German civil registry offices, archives and church repositories. Earlier, in 1938, Jewish documentary holdings had already suffered massive losses, during and after the Night of Broken Glass [*Kristallnacht*]. On top of these well known events a final factor must be mentioned. At the end of WWII, the Nazis tried to erase traces of their misdeeds, as for example the concentration camp records at Auschwitz.

When the Allied bombings on Berlin became a daily event, the activities in the archival institutions and their documents had to be protected. These archives were relocated to isolated locations in South Saxony and Thüringen in such places as ancient castles or unused salt mines in order to keep them out of the range of bombing squads taking off from England.

The *Reichsippenamts* (RSA) continued its operations until the very end of the war, ending its microfilming only in April 1945. Did the RSA's operations — gathering the original documents, copying and conserving them in protected locations — help preserve a significant part of German genealogical sources after the War? As Jewish genealogists, we would certainly hope this is true with respect to Jewish source material, although the originals were almost totally destroyed. Thus, only paper copies and microfilms remain. The paper copies are difficult to distinguish from a print made after the war from a microfilm.

MICROFILMS OF VITAL RECORDS: WHAT HAS BEEN LOCATED AND INDEXED

After victory, the Allied authorities, each following their own policies within their respective occupation zones, pursued the gathering of evidentiary material. Many documents were “safeguarded” by the USA, the German Democratic Republic and the USSR. Many microfilms of vital record registers were found and are now available in Jerusalem at the Central Archives of the Jewish People (CAHJP), in New York at the Leo Baeck Institute and in Berlin at the Centrum Judaicum (earlier kept in Leipzig before the German reunification). The Latter Day Saints (henceforth LDS) have copied these microfilms as well. Indexes allowing identification and location of these microfilms are cited in the following publications:

— “The Complete Archive of the German Jews,” an article by Peter Landé in *Avotaynu*, Vol. 9, Spring 1993, gives a list of all localities whose vital data records have been found, as well as their location.

— “Source Material for German-Jewish Genealogy at the Central Archives for the History

During the 1870s, Germany introduced a unified system of collecting vital records, though these were still kept at the local level. These records did not distinguish between Jews and others. However, after 1938, Jews were singled out by adding “Sara” and “Israel” to their given names. Many of these vital records survived World War II and are still maintained at the local level by civil records offices [*Standesämter*], or in some cases by local or regional archives. Records are kept at the place where an event took place, i.e. birth, marriage and death records might be located in three different places depending on where the event occurred. Researchers may request copies of these records but only if they are direct descendants since access is limited by law (*Datenschutz*). [See this author's chapter on Germany in *Avotaynu's Guide to Jewish Genealogy*, published in 2004.]

One important collection of information not created by the Nazis, but taken over by them,

are the files of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*. This organization dates back to 1905 and was an attempt to centralize and preserve Jewish vital records. After 1933, the Nazis used the collected material to identify Jews. Renamed *Gesamtarchiv der Juden in Deutschland* by the Nazis, it remained in existence until the early 1940s. This collection, minus birth, marriage and death records, was filmed and contains detailed information on the operations of the *Gesamtarchiv* during the Nazi time as well as considerable information on the fate of individual Jews and Jewish communities after 1933. The data is available on film at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and at the *Centrum Judaicum* in Berlin. A list of individual names appearing in this collection is available at www.jewishgen.org.

— PETER LANDÉ

of the Jewish People,” an article in *Avotaynu*, Volume 15, Summer 1999, by Esther Ramon and Hadassah Assouline, updates earlier information for these Jerusalem holdings. It stresses that the microforms available at the CAHJP are contact copies made by Gatermann from the microfilm originals. Their quality and ease of use are substantially below that of the original microfilm rolls, provided the latter are available.

— The *Taschenbuch für Familiengeschichtsforschung* [Manual for Family History Research]. The chapter devoted to Jewish genealogy by Diana Schulle [pp. 159-181] is very comprehensive and is followed by a rich bibliography.¹ It also contains a table of the RSA vital records available on microfilm in Berlin, Jerusalem, New York (LBI) and the LDS Family History Centers. The LDS microfilms can be found in their catalog, on-line or on CD-ROM, under the headings “Jewish records” and “Minority records.” It is noted that a number of church registers contain Jewish records, but are not mentioned as such in their indexes.

All research tools must be checked, as shown by the following experience. Although the small community of Odenheim (Baden) is not listed in any of the above cited publications, it does appear in the section “Jewish Records” in the LDS catalog, under film No. 1056284. At the very end of the reel, one finds the birth, marriage and death records of the Jews from 1810 to 1869, as recorded by the local Catholic priests. The film is taken from a copy of the original register, probably made in 1938 and sent to the lower court [*Amtsgericht*] of Bruchsal. There the clerk recorded “Israel” and “Sara” as the “additional chosen given names” imposed upon the Jews on the page facing the birth records for those still alive in 1938.²

OTHER RSA MICROFILMS OF INTEREST TO GENEALOGISTS

Other findings appear serendipitously from time to time, as illustrated by the following example. While searching for documents related to Ichenhausen (Bavaria), I inquired at the Augsburg State Archive. In the collection of *Jüdische Standesbücher* [Jewish Registry Records], there were eleven items, among which were birth registers starting in 1784, a census and two *Matrikeln*, including one for 1813. In fact, the latter was the Jewish register showing the adoption of fixed surnames. I ordered a copy.

To my great surprise, the bundle started with a cover form containing various information about the process of microfilming performed on behalf of the RSA, and that the name of the contractor performing the filming was Gatermann and Co. These details are as follows:

— Volume No.: RSA J. 1564. Jewish community: Ichenhausen. County: Günzburg. District: Schwaben.

— Surnames newly adopted by the family heads. Date: 1813

— Status of the original: Paper yellowish. Script faded, slightly visible by transparency, bound centrally.

— Page numbers: 1-74. Size of the original (cm): 34 : 22 : 11. Serial numbering.

— Blank pages: 58, 73.

— Original kept at: RSA. Taken at: Rathsfeld Castle by Gatermann Brothers, Duisburg-Manborn.

— Number of takes: 75. Date: 8. 2. 45. Film type: Perutz 9615.

Erläuterungen auf der Vorderseite beachten!

Vor Ausfüllung die ganze Ergänzungskarte durchlesen!

Lfd. Nr.	Vorname	Familienname bei Frauen auch Mädchennamen	Geburts- tag, -monat, -Geburtsjahr	Geburtsort und -kreis (siehe Erläuterung III)	War oder ist einer der vier Großeltern der Rasse nach Volljude? (Ja oder nein) (siehe Erläuterung IV)			Haben Sie ein Hochschol- oder Fachschulstudium abgeschlossen? (Ja oder nein)		Wenn ja, an welcher Hoch- oder Fachschule oder vor welchem Prüfungsamt haben sie Staats- oder Abschlussprüfungen abgelegt? (siehe Erläuterung V)
					Großvater väterlicherseits	Großmutter väterlicherseits	Großvater mütterlicherseits	Großmutter mütterlicherseits	ja	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A. Sämtliche Anwesende										
1.	Paul	Schmitz	8.10.1885	Merkissa, Krs. Lauban	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	
2.	Maria	Schmitz, geb. Zwaucka	18.9.1888	Honigfeld, Krs. Stoben	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	
3.	Hermann	Schmitz	11.3.1910	Magdeburg	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	
4.	Anna	Kwoczek	3.10.1903	Wepplitz, Krs. Stoben	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	
5.	Alfred	Jung	15.1.1889	Schönebeck, Krs. Cöln a. S.	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	Höhere techn. Lehranstalt, Breslau
6.	Franz	Müller	30.5.1912	Danzig	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	Technische Hochschule Danzig
1.	Sally	Cohn	9.8.1880	Loth. Polen	ja	ja	ja	ja	nein	
2.	Heerzette	Cohn, geb. Oppenheimer	20.3.1883	Breslau	ja	nein	nein	nein	nein	
3.	Georg	Cohn	25.10.1905	Berlin	ja	ja	nein	nein	ja	Universität Berlin
4.	Ruth	Schmidt, geb. Cohn	30.9.1907	Berlin	ja	ja	nein	nein	nein	
5.	Elisbeth	Schmidt	16.1.1880	Berlin	nein	nein	ja	nein	nein	
6.	Martin	Schulze	24.5.1889	Kauffung, Krs. Goldberg	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										
9.										
10.										
B. Vorübergehend abwesende Mitglieder der Haushaltung										
Beispiel	Richard	Schmidt	19.11.1904	Hannau	nein	nein	nein	nein	nein	
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										

Bescheinigung: Daß die Angaben vollständig und nach bestem Wissen gemacht worden sind, bescheinigt:
Hier bitte Ihre Unterschrift: _____ Wohnung: _____ Straße-Nr. _____
 (Unterschrift des Haushaltungsvorstandes, seines Voreters oder sonstiger zur Ausfüllung verpflichteter Personen)

ABOVE: Facsimile of the supplementary form (Ergänzungskarte) required of Jews in connection with the German census of 1938.

1 Wolfgang Ribbe & Eckart Henning, *Taschenbuch für Familiengeschichtsforschung*, Degener & Co., Neustadt an der Aisch, 2001.

2 I have a birth record from the original register (source: *Vierfelder* archive at the Leo Baeck Institute) and its copy from the microfilm. The original register was probably seized by the RSA and has disappeared. The duplicate is archived at the *Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe*. The president of the *Amtsgericht Bruchsal* writes that, contrary to evidence, “it is highly improbable that the birth register has ever been present at the Court.”

3 See the discussion on Achim Gercke in Part II of this series, p. 4.

4 These cards are available in the Mormon catalog, found with the keyword *Ahnenstammkartei*.

5 Because of the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, the census was postponed, actually taking place in 1939.

6 These are the records that typically have been microfilmed by the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and are available through its Family History Centers.

The typewritten call number of the Augsburg State Archive appeared at the bottom of the page.

Gatermann was a pioneer in microfilming. The company started microfilming church registers and public archive documents in 1932. The filming of the Jewish *Matrikeln* was a result of a confidential government order, with the Gatermann owners personally doing the filming. The filming operations were transferred to the Rathsfeld Castle, near Rossla, some 80 kilometers west of Halle, prior to October 1943. The detailed cover form reflects typical German accuracy; it keeps the contractor harmless in case of defects already apparent in the original.

The Augsburg documents are probably a paper print from the microfilm; this seems to be confirmed by the typewritten added call number on the cover sheet. The other pages of the document bear, in their upper margin, the manuscript identification — “RSA J 1564” — probably added on the original register prior to microfilming. This type of citation is the more common way that the RSA microfilms are treated; the cover sheet appears only occasionally.

In the indexes and research tools of the Augsburg Archives, there is no mention about whether the document is an original or a copy/microcopy from the RSA. The situation is similar in the catalog of the Family History Center of the Mormon Church.

THE CARD FILES OF THE NAZI ERA

It would be of great interest to find the card files created by the RSA because their structure makes them of direct use for genealogy. Apparently they have disappeared. What happened in particular to the file set up by Gercke³ prior to 1933? This file became the main database of the RSA and ended up being called the file of alien descendency, *Fremdstämmigkeitskartei*. Financial and personnel problems, as well as internal conflicts, progressively led to limiting this file to those individuals who were targets of the racist politics, primarily Jews or suspected Jews. If it were found, it would provide an invaluable source of genealogical information.

As already mentioned in Part Two, much of the ASTAKA file of the Dresden Genealogy Society survived the War. It is now accessible to the public at *Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie* in Leipzig. Since it duplicated the Gercke files from 1933 to 1939, at least in part, it should contain information about Jews.⁴ The same *Zentralstelle* also houses a number of family trees, but probably few are of interest to Jewish researchers.

THE 1939 CENSUS

There is another specifically Jewish source of information created by the Nazi regime. In the national census planned for 1938,⁵ a supplementary form [*Ergänzungskarte*] relating to the racial status of the individual was added to the questionnaire. While the general questionnaire was to be handed to the census agent, who was allowed to check it on the spot for acceptable completion, the additional form was to be filed in a special sealed envelope.

The figure on the facing page shows a facsimile of this form. In an instruction sheet, five points are stressed. False declarations, or refusal to return the form, left the respondent subject to severe punishment. Every person responsible for a household census questionnaire [*Haushaltsliste*] had to complete the form. The quality of being Jewish (columns 5 to 8) was not determined by religion but by race, i.e. by the Nürnberg Laws:

Translation of the column headings are as follows: (1) given name, (2) surname, possibly followed by maiden name, (3) birth date, (4) place and county of birth, (5) through (8) determination of the ethnicity of each of the four grandparents; are they racially Jewish?, answer by yes or no, (9) have you graduated from University or technical high school? (10) if applicable, name of institution where graduated.

Two families are presented in the form as examples; one is “purely Aryan,” the other is a mixed marriage. This second family shows the genealogical value of the form to Jewish researchers. With

few exceptions these forms have survived and are kept at the *Bundesarchiv* (Federal Archive) in Berlin Lichterfelde. They have been microfilmed by the Mormons.

The census is organized by city/town, or in the case of smaller localities, by region. Thus, it is necessary to know where a person resided in May 1939, when the census collection took place. Moreover, census results for Thüringen and a number of Ruhr cities were lost. Nevertheless, this remains a valuable source of information on the 125,000 Jews still remaining in Germany in early 1939.

GERMAN-JEWISH GENEALOGY TO CONTINUE

Even in cases where the originals and the RSA films have disappeared, genealogists should not despair. The Nazis did not seize all sources that can contribute in tracing our ancestors. For example, some genealogists who emigrated in time transported their files and documents to safe destinations such as the Leo Baeck Institute. A good case in point concerns the name adoption lists and numerous family trees in the collection of Berthold Rosenthal, now at the Leo Baeck Institute.

Despite the adverse effects due to WWII on the preservation of archival material, local and regional jurisdictions retained, for the most part, their administrative records, which typically date as far back as the 17th century. These local records can still be found today in their original paper documentation and contain information concerning the life cycle events of the inhabitants in the form of *Ratsprotokollen* (administrative/city council records), tax lists, judicial processes, etc. They often contain records of interest to Jewish investigators, including such specific Jewish oriented reports that list protection payments (*Schutzgeld*), special censuses of Jews, name-change lists and special tax assessments. In addition, the birth, marriage and death records, maintained by the local church and including the vital statistics data for Jews, are also still available.⁶

THE WIMPFHEIMER FAMILY FROM ICHENHAUSEN, BAVARIA

BY ADAM YAMEY

My matrilineal great-great-grandfather — Heinrich Wimpfheimer of Ichenhausen, Bavaria — was married to Rebecka¹ Seligmann. This marriage is recorded on a family tree of the Seligmann family of Ichenhausen.² This led to my interest in knowing more about the Ichenhausen Wimpfheimer family and its ramifications.

I began my research by posting a query on the online GerSIG discussion forum at JewishGen.org,³ and was advised to contact Michael Wimpfheimer in New York City. He sent me a copy of a letter from George Winter in Australia and some family trees compiled by Harold Spittell. These trees included families that had blood relationships with Spittell (for example, the Ullmann and Wimpfheimer families). I was very fortunate to receive these trees, as I realized from one of them, and from the Seligmann tree mentioned above, that Mr. Spittell was, like me, a descendant of Heinrich Wimpfheimer.⁴

I also received from Allan Hirsh, Jr. of Baltimore, Maryland, a copy of a family tree listing the descendants of Meir Kalonomis (Wimpfheimer),⁵ who lived between 1660 and 1740 in Ittlingen, Baden. My Wimpfheimer correspondent in New York is one of his descendants. At present, I have no evidence to connect this Wimpfheimer family from Ittlingen with my Wimpfheimers of Ichenhausen. Thus, the Ichenhausen Wimpfheimer family remains my subject.

I wanted to discover the names of the parents of my mother's great-grandfather. One of his daughters, Clothilde Rieser,⁶ records the date of her father's death as 4 August 1876, at age 64.⁷ This implies that his birth year was 1811-12. According to a list showing the surnames adopted officially by Jewish families in Ichenhausen in 1813,⁸ two individuals took the family name Wimpfheimer.⁹ One of these was Moses Wimpfheimer, who was married to Bessle. They had a daughter named Sarah Wimpfheimer,¹⁰ and George Winter was one of her descendants. His widow sent me documentation that listed the nine children of Moses and Bessle Wimpfheimer.¹¹ Included in this list was a Heinrich Wimpfheimer, born 1813 and shown as the eldest child. This Heinrich was married to Babette Seligmann, and had five children. Was this "my" Heinrich Wimpfheimer?

I wrote to Professor Georg Kreuzer at the *Kreisarchiv des Landkreises Günzburg* in Ichenhausen.¹² He informed me that my mother's great-grandfather Heinrich Wimpfheimer, born 6 January 1813,¹³ was recorded in the *isrealitischen Standesregister* as a son of Moses¹⁴ and Bessle Wimpfheimer,¹⁵ and was the husband of Beppi¹⁶ Seligmann.

Kreuzer told me that Moses Wimpfheimer was a merchant in Ichenhausen dealing in wool and cotton. His son Heinrich was, until 1842, a hardware dealer, and after 1844 a licensed

dealer in glass [*konzessionierter Glashändler*]. From 1844 to 1846, Heinrich was the *Kultusführer* [religious leader] of Ichenhausen.¹⁷ Heinrich had a number of siblings. According to Kreuzer, some of them immigrated to the USA by the mid-1850s. The fate of Heinrich's business after his death is not known. According to my friend Arnold Erlanger, who was one of the few members of Ichenhausen's Jewish community to survive the Holocaust, there was a Wimpfheimer shop (for clothing and material) in Ichenhausen until the late 1930s.¹⁸ However, he could not recall anyone living there with the name Wimpfheimer.¹⁹

It was now clear that the Heinrich Wimpfheimer in Winter's data was my mother's great-grandfather. From his data I produced the following list of the descendants of Moses and Bessel Wimpfheimer:

Table 1: Children of Moses and Bessle Wimpfheimer of Ichenhausen

1. Moses WIMPFHEIMER (b.1784)
sp: Bessle (?Babette) Or Pessel HIRSCH ? OR HENLE (b.1791, d.1829)
 - |-2. Heinrich WIMPFHEIMER (b.1813-)
| sp: Babette SELIGMANN (= Rebecca Seligmann)
 - |-2. Jeanette WIMPFHEIMER (b.1814-)
 - |-2. Abraham WIMPFHEIMER (b.1817-)
 - |-2. David WIMPFHEIMER (b.1816-)
 - |-2. Sarah WIMPFHEIMER (b.1819, d.1906)
| sp: Heinrich REITLINGER (b.1812, m.1836, d.1884)
 - |-2. Jakob WIMPFHEIMER (b.1821-)
 - |-2. Gitel WIMPFHEIMER (b.1823-)
 - |-2. Breindel WIMPFHEIMER (b.1825-)
 - |-2. Josef WIMPFHEIMER (b.1826-)

[All were born in Ichenhausen.]

At this stage I had not only a list of descendants for Heinrich (they appear on the tree of the Seligmann family of Ichenhausen), but also a list of descendants of Sarah (Wimpfheimer) Reitlinger (this was sent by Mrs. Winter). However, I had no information about the possible spouses or offspring of any of the other children of Moses and Bessle.

Dr. Ralph Baer of Washington, D.C. sent me the married name and address of Harold Spittell's daughter in Australia, Leonie, to whom I wrote. She sent me various family trees compiled by her late father. She also sent me a transcription of a diary kept by a Pauline Ullmann for the year 1914. The diary came complete with explanatory notes written by Pauline's grandson, Pierre L. Ullmann. I will refer to this as *Pauline's Diary*. Pauline Ullmann's husband Sigmund,²⁰ had a sister Antonia ('Toni') who married Jakob, one of the sons of my Heinrich Wimpfheimer. It turned out that Spittell, who had compiled the family trees (sent by his daughter), was not only a descendant of Heinrich Wimpfheimer but also a relative of the diarist Pauline Ullmann.²¹

I found that the name Wimpfheimer appeared in a number of different family trees, all linked in various ways to Ichenhausen. I wondered whether these Wimpfheimers might possibly be connected in some way to each other and also to my Wimpfheimer family. *Pauline's Diary* turned out to be, in a manner of speaking, my "Rosetta Stone."

Four Wimpfheimers appear in one of the trees prepared by Spittell [see Figure 1 for a simplified version of his drawing]. Two of them on the tree, named Abraham and David, whom I will call Abraham II and David II, respectively, are shown as brothers, and sons of a third Wimpfheimer, called Moses, whom I will call Moses II. A fourth Wimpfheimer on this same tree is called ?Wimpfheimer by Spittell. He is depicted on the tree as being unrelated to Abraham II and David

1 Rebecka was variously known as Peppi, Beppi or Babette.

2 This is recorded on the family tree showing the descendants of Jakob Seligmann (1775-1843) of Ichenhausen, which was compiled by Reinhold Seligmann in 1935 (revised 1966).

3 www.jewishgen.org.

4 As will become evident later, H. Spittell was aware that he had a Wimpfheimer ancestor, but he did not appear to know that this was Heinrich.

5 Hirsh had received this data from Werner L. Frank. For further information about this family, visit <http://home.pacbell.net/wlfrank/index.html>.

6 Clothilde Wimpfheimer (1841-1921) married Abraham Rieser (1833-1870) of Laupheim in Baden-Württemberg.

7 Handwritten family notes made by Clothilde Rieser. The same date appears on a gravestone for Heinrich Wimpfheimer in the Jewish Cemetery in Ichenhausen.

8 The 1813 *Judenmatrikel* for Ichenhausen, transcribed by Ernest Kallmann from *israelitisches Standesregister No. 24*, in Augsburg. Moses Wimpfheimer was known as "Moses Wimpfheimer" prior to 1813 (Wimpfheimer was his *zuname*; his *vatersname* is not listed). There was also in Ichenhausen a Nathan Löb

(Löb was his *vatersname*) who in 1813 adopted the surname Wimpfheimer.

9 I do not know the origin of the name Wimpfheimer. Perhaps it is related to the town of Wimpfen, a few kilometres north of Heilbronn in Baden-Württemberg.

10 Sarah Wimpfheimer married Heinrich Reitlinger.

11 She sent me photocopies of documents that had been sent from Ichenhausen to her late husband.

12 This organization is housed in the building that used to be the Rabbi's residence in Ichenhausen.

13 On Heinrich's gravestone, his birthdate was recorded as 22 January 1833.

14 Moses Wimpfheimer's dates are not certain but according to the Ichenhauser *israelitischen Geburtsregister* for 1784, he was alive in May of that year.

15 Bessle was the first wife of Moses Wimpfheimer. In 1835, he married Sophie Gumpert.

16 See footnote 1 for variations of Beppi's name.

17 This is recorded on his gravestone.

18 An autobiography, *Ein Schwabe überlebt Auschwitz*, by Arnold Erlanger, was published by Wissner in Augsburg, in 2002.

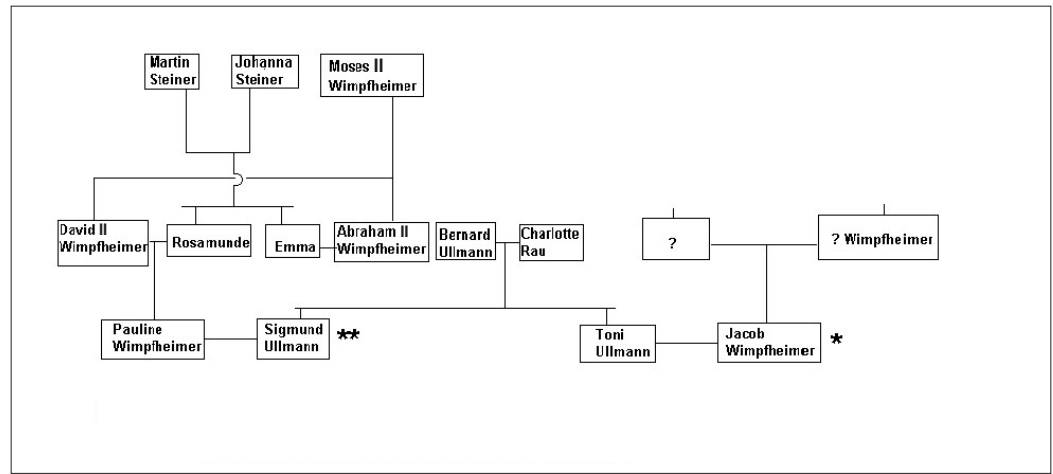


FIGURE 1: An extract from the family tree compiled by H. Spittel. * Indicates Jacob Wimpfheimer, Great grand uncle of H. Spittel, on his mother's side. ** Indicates Sigmund Ullmann, H. Spittel's grand uncle, on his father's side.

II and bare of antecedents. However Spittel's list of the descendants of ?Wimpfheimer matches those of Heinrich Wimpfheimer (as found on the Seligmann family tree). Thus, ?Wimpfheimer on Spittel's tree is my mother's great-grandfather Heinrich. I was interested to discover my Heinrich Wimpfheimer on the same family tree as the three other Wimpfheimers, yet frustrated not to see any links between them.

According to Spittel's tree, the brothers Abraham II and David II married two sisters, Emma and Rosamunde, respectively. They are shown as daughters of Martin and Johanna Steiner of Innsbruck. David II and his wife Rosamunde had a daughter Pauline Wimpfheimer, who married Sigmund Ullmann.²² She was Pauline Ullmann, the author of *Pauline's Diary*. Spittel does not record any descendants for Abraham II and his wife Emma. This did not allow me to find any connection between ?Wimpfheimer (i.e. "my" Heinrich) and the other Wimpfheimers on Spittel's tree (i.e. Abraham II and his brother David II).

I discovered yet another Wimpfheimer, an Abraham Wimpfheimer, whom I will call Abraham III Wimpfheimer, who married Caroline (Gelle) Friedberger. Caroline was a daughter of Sophie Seligmann, a sister-in-law of Heinrich Wimpfheimer. Sophie married Leopold Siegfried Friedberger of Ichenhausen. Mrs. Marjorie Gerstle²³ in New Jersey sent me a list of the descendants of Sophie Friedberger, which she compiled about thirty years ago. From this, I found that Abraham III and Caroline (née Friedberger) had a family as listed below in Table 2:

Table 2: Children of Abraham III and Caroline Wimpfheimer

1. Abraham III WIMPFHEIMER

sp: Caroline (Gelle) FRIEDBERGER (b.1829, d.1891)

|-2. Pauline WIMPFHEIMER (b.1845 — Philadelphia)

| sp: Anthony HEIDEMANN

|-2. Rosamond WIMPFHEIMER (b.1846, d.1917)

| sp: Albert Edward WOOLF (b.1846, d.1920)

| |-3. Sarah WOOLF (b.1878 — New York City, d.1878 — New York City)

| |-3. Samuel Johnson WOOLF (b.1880, d.1948)

| | sp: Edith TRUMAN (b.1879 d.1956)

| +-3. Edgar Allen WOOLF (b.1889 — New York City, d.1948 — Hollywood, USA)

|-2. Sophie WIMPFHEIMER (b.1848, d.1936 — USA)

-2. Samuel WIMPFHEIMER (b.1853, d.1870)

No other information about Abraham III, his parents and siblings (if any), was recorded in Mrs. Gerstle's list. I wrote to her to ask about Abraham III. She replied that she knew no more about him except that Abraham III was buried next to his wife in Philadelphia's Mount Sinai Cemetery. My relative John Dalsimer, who lives in that city, looked at his gravestone but found no further information about Abraham III, not even the date of his death.

Caroline's daughter Rosamond married Albert E. Woolf.²⁴ They had a son Samuel Johnson Woolf (S.J. Woolf), who became a noted portrait artist in the USA. His reputation as a portraitist must have been great because people as well known as Mark Twain, Albert Einstein and Benito Mussolini were prepared to be, and were, drawn by him.²⁵

S.J. Woolf is mentioned in some of the notes written next to entries in *Pauline's Diary*. Pauline Ullmann's grandson writes in a note to an entry in his grandmother's diary, dated 8 February 1914:

I did hear my father say that S.J. Woolf, an artist who wrote Here Am I was a relative.

How was S.J. Woolf related? Was it to the Ullmanns, to the Wimpfheimers or to some other family? Notes, written by her grandson and found next to Pauline Ullmann's diary entry dated 18 March 1914, begin to clarify this situation:

Samuel J. Woolf "Here I Am"²⁶ [New York Random House 1941] says on page 5 that his maternal grandmother's name was Wimpfheimer and on page 336 that [his] mother was Rosamund. Pauline Ullman wrote on the back of a family photo, "Cousine Rosamunde Wimpfheimer." S.J. Woolf also writes [pp. 33, 35, 327] that his maiden aunt Sophie, in 1932, was well over 80. The maternal grandfather's name was Abraham Wimpfheimer [p. 3] but he never mentions the first name of his maternal grandmother. He also says on p. 3 that he was named after a dead maternal uncle.²⁷ S.J. Woolf's brother was Edgar Allen Woolf and "the only sister of my mother who was married to a German Lutheran"²⁸ [p. 57] Was this Pauline Heideman by any chance?²⁹ But I have other photos of other Wimpfheimer girls taken in Philadelphia: Bertha and Adelheid.

We know from the data provided by Mrs. Gerstle that S.J. Woolf's maternal grandmother was Caroline Wimpfheimer [see Table 2]. Pauline's reference to "Cousine Rosamunde Wimpfheimer" suggests the possibility that Pauline (Wimpfheimer) Ullmann and Rosamunde Wimpfheimer shared a pair of grandparents. In which case, Abraham III (father of Rosamunde Woolf) might have been a brother of David II, (father of Pauline Ullmann). If this were so then Abraham III (in Mrs. Gerstle's data) and Abraham II (shown on Spittell's tree as a brother of David II), must have been one and the same person. However, if that is true, a snag arises. Spittell recorded Abraham II as having married Emma Steiner rather than Caroline Friedberger.

Undaunted by this, but puzzled, I obtained a copy of the book to which reference is made in the notes to Pauline's Diary: *Here am I*, an autobiographical work by S.J. Woolf.³⁰ The author provided material that led me to consider the existence of further connections between the various Wimpfheimers I had encountered:

Grandmother Wimpfheimer was a short old lady, who parted her hair in the middle, and whose soft, gentle blue eyes shone behind gold rimmed spectacles. She and her husband, together with their four children, emigrated from Bavaria. My mother was five years old at the time, yet she remembered soldiers breaking into the house and looking for her father. He escaped, however, and with other revolutionists found refuge here in 1848. My grandfather's family was one of means, but when he came of age, he went to Paris and squandered his patrimony, so that upon his arrival in Philadelphia there was little with which to feed many mouths. Within a short time he died, leaving my grandmother, who could speak no English,

¹⁹ There is no "Wimpfheimer" listed in the September 1938 *Einwohnerbuch für Stadt und kreis Günzburg* listing for Ichenhausen, sent to me by Prof. Kreuzer. Many other Jewish names are listed in it.

²⁰ The Ullmann family lived in Fürth, Bavaria [information from Ralph Baer].

²¹ H. Spittell's father was Max Spittell. He was married to Berta Goldman, a great grandchild of Heinrich Wimpfheimer, and was the son of Bertha Ullmann, sister of Sigmund, who married Pauline.

²² Sigmund had a sister Toni (Antonia) who was married to Heinrich Wimpfheimer's son Jakob (i.e. the son of ?Wimpfheimer, on Spittell's tree).

²³ She is a descendant of Sophie Friedberger.

²⁴ Albert Edward Woolf was born in New York. He was a chemist and inventor of the Electrozone method for disinfecting water, sewage etc. See his entry in www.jewishencyclopedia.com.

²⁵ See *Drawn from Life*, by S.J. Woolf, published by Whittlesey House, New York and London, 1932.

²⁶ P.L. Ullmann misquotes the title. The correct title of the book is *Here am I*.

²⁷ The "dead uncle" in the extract refers to Samuel Wimpfheimer [see Table 2].

28 This is actually a misquote. S.J. Woolf wrote, “the only sister of my mother who was married was married to a German Lutheran.”

to support her children. This she succeeded in doing by first going into the human hair business and later manufacturing upholstering trimmings. I was eleven years old when she died...

— S.J. Woolf, p. 4

29 The answer to P. L. Ullmann’s question is “yes.”

30 The title of his book is taken from I Samuel III, verse 4.

31 On 21 April 1851, the ship *Splendid* docked at the port of New York. It had commenced its voyage at Le Havre in France. Listed among the passengers on board were the following Wimpfheimers, all female: Caroline (age 29), Pauline (age 7) and Rosine (age 6). Their place of origin was Bavaria. This may be a coincidental grouping of similar names or it may refer to the arrival of “Grandmother Wimpfheimer” in the USA. Curiously, Sophie, born in 1848 (see Table 2), is not listed among these passengers. [Information accessed via www.ancestry.com.]

32 ‘Eddie’ was S.J. Woolf’s brother Edgar Allen Woolf, playwright and screenwriter [he co-wrote the script for the film *The Wizard of Oz*].

33 Some of the events described by S.J. Woolf are difficult to date precisely, if at all.

34 For more about this, see *L’Affaire Dreyfus* by Pierre Miquel, published by Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1959.

35 This is well documented. See, for example, www.farhi.org.

Grandmother Wimpfheimer was Caroline Wimpfheimer, wife of Abraham III (see Table 2). The excerpt above suggests that Abraham III, the grandfather of S.J. Woolf, left Bavaria by 1848, and that his wife followed him, but possibly later. If S.J. Woolf is correct about the age of his mother when she left Germany, then the date of Rosamunde’s departure should have been about 1851.³¹ By this date, Pauline, Rosamunde and Sophie were already born, but not their brother Samuel (see Table 2). As to the identity of the fourth child referred to in the excerpt, I will return later.

S.J. Woolf later introduces a cousin of his mother:

It was at about this time that Eddie³² was stricken with diphtheria. There was no anti-toxin, and mother feared I might catch the disease. She was doubly frightened, because but a short time before she had heard from Paris that her cousin, who was married to a brother of the persecuted Captain Dreyfus, had died from the scourge. Accordingly I was shipped, with Aunt Sophie, my mother’s unmarried sister, to Bridgeport... — S.J. Woolf, p. 33

This excerpt refers to a period when S.J. Woolf was quite young, probably before 1894.³³ Who was this cousin married to a Dreyfus in Paris? Captain Alfred Dreyfus [of the Dreyfus Affair³⁴] had three brothers.³⁵ All of them were married. None of their wives appears to have died during the period referred to in the excerpt above. It is possible that Woolf may have confused his mother’s fear for her cousin’s life in Paris with the actual death of her cousin; he was very young when this outbreak of diphtheria occurred, and he wrote his recall many years later. One of the Dreyfus brothers, Jacques, was married in 1874 to Louise Wimpfheimer.³⁶ She was a daughter of Jacob Wimpfheimer, resident in Philadelphia, and Rosalie, née Frauenfeld.³⁷ This Jacob Wimpfheimer and Jakob, son of Moses and Bessle Wimpfheimer [see Table 1], share the same year of birth: 1821. If Louise was the cousin in Paris of Rosamunde Woolf, possibly the fathers of Rosamunde (i.e. Abraham III) and Louise (i.e. Jacob) were brothers.

From the evidence in *Pauline’s Diary* and *Here am I* and from what I had learnt about Louise Wimpfheimer Dreyfus I began to hypothesize the following:

1. Abraham II was Abraham III (grandfather of S.J. Woolf).
2. Abraham III and Jacob Wimpfheimer, father of Louise (Wimpfheimer) Dreyfus, were brothers.
3. If it turned out that 1. and 2. were true then Abraham III, David II and Jacob would have been, following Spittell’s tree, all sons of Moses II.

The big question for me was whether Moses II on Spittell’s tree was also the father of ?Wimpfheimer (i.e. of my Heinrich Wimpfheimer)? Were Moses II and Moses, husband of Bessle the same person?

I wrote to Professor Kreuzer in Ichenhausen and to Günter Steiner at the *Stadtarchiv* in Augsburg. Without informing them about what I had hypothesized, I asked them whether any marriages were recorded in the Bavarian archives for Wimpfheimers who were known to be brothers of “my” Heinrich Wimpfheimer [see Table 1]. If there was such information available and it showed that Heinrich’s brothers had the same brides as Abrahams II & III, David II and Jacob [father of Louise Dreyfus], then it would confirm the suspicion that was lurking in my head

that Heinrich, my ancestor, was their brother. To my great satisfaction, their replies confirmed my suspicion. Table 3 lists the marriages of some of the sons of Moses Wimpfheimer as recorded in the Bavarian archives:³⁸

Table 3: Marriages of some of the brothers of Heinrich Wimpfheimer

12 June 1839: David Wimpfheimer and Rosamunde Steiner
27 December 1841: Abraham Wimpfheimer and Karoline Friedberger
7 May 1844: Jakob Wimpfheimer and Rosala Frauenfeld

(All sons of Moses and Bessie Wimpfheimer)

The three brothers, listed in Table 3, were all younger brothers of Heinrich Wimpfheimer, my mother's great grandfather. David and Abraham in Table 1 are respectively the same people as Spittell's David II and Abraham II. Abraham II is also the Abraham III in Mrs. Gerstle's list of descendants of Sophie Friedberger. Jacob, the father of Louise Dreyfus, was Heinrich's brother, Jakob in Table 1.

While Heinrich Wimpfheimer remained in Germany, presumably to run the family business, his three brothers (Abraham, David and Jakob), together with a younger brother Joseph, are noted in the Bavarian archives as having migrated to the USA.³⁹ Many of Heinrich's descendants migrated both to the USA and to South Africa (including my mother's maternal grandmother, Heinrich's granddaughter, Hedwig Rieser⁴⁰ and her three siblings).

The archives confirm that Abraham Wimpfheimer married Caroline Friedberger (on 27 December 1841). The following children are recorded: Rosamunde (born 1 June 1844), Pauline (born 19 March 1845), August (born 30 November 1845) and Bertha (born April 1847). Two of the children, born after 1847 and recorded in Table 2 (Sophie and Samuel) do not appear in the archives. This is not surprising — S.J. Woolf wrote that his grandfather, Abraham Wimpfheimer, left Bavaria in 1848. There is no mention in the Bavarian records of S.J. Woolf's aunt Sophie Wimpfheimer, who was born in 1848. This might be because she was born after the family had left Bavaria. The archives record that August died in childhood — before the family moved to the USA. The records in Bavaria state that Abraham and Caroline migrated to America with three daughters: Pauline, Rosamunde and Bertha. Bertha might have been the fourth child to whom S.J. Woolf refers on page 4 of his book. If she was, she might have died young, as she is not recorded in Mrs. Gerstle's family tree [see Table 2].

The Bavarian Archives also confirm that Rosamunde Steiner married David Wimpfheimer [see Table 3] and that they had children whose names match those of the children of David II, recorded on Spittell's tree. The problem of who married Emma Steiner (Rosamunde's sister) remained unresolved. We know that it was not Abraham II who married Emma, as is shown on Spittell's tree, since he had married Caroline Friedberger. While browsing through the United States Federal Census⁴¹ for 1860 I noted a Joseph Wimpfheimer, a jeweler, who was head of a household in Philadelphia. He lived with his wife Emma, two girls, both Wimpfheimers: Bertha, age 12 and Adeline, age 9.⁴² All were born in Germany except Adeline, who was born in Pennsylvania. In the 1870 Census for Philadelphia, there is a similar household. In it, Emma is described as being from Austria. I wondered whether it might have been Joseph Wimpfheimer who married Emma Steiner.

A chance e-mail message from George Arnstein led me to contact a distant cousin, Jochi Weil, a Seligmann descendant living in Switzerland. Not only is he interested in Ichenhausen but he also has connections with the Jewish Museum in Hohenems, Austria. He put me in contact with a curator at the museum, who in turn directed me to Professor Thomas Albricht at the University of Innsbruck. To my great good fortune, Albricht has worked on the history of the family of Martin Steiner of Innsbruck. He confirmed what is shown on Spittell's tree: Martin Steiner was

³⁶ Dates for Louise: 20 October 1852, Philadelphia-20 October 1931, Paris.

³⁷ Information from the marriage certificate of Louise and Jacques Dreyfus, sent to me by Eve Line Blum.

³⁸ Recorded in Ichenhausen's *israelitischen Personenstandregister* 19.

³⁹ Information from Professor Kreuzer.

⁴⁰ In South Africa Hedwig Rieser married Franz Ginsberg, born in Beuthen (Upper Silesia), who eventually became a signatory to the Act of Union in 1910 and Senator in South Africa's Parliament.

⁴¹ Accessed via www.ancestry.com.

⁴² In the note to the excerpt from *Pauline's Diary* dated 18 March 1914, this sentence is of interest: "But I have other photos of other Wimpfheimer girls taken in Philadelphia: Bertha and Adelheid." Was Adelheid perhaps Adaline as listed in the USA Census?

⁴³ Joseph migrated from Bavaria in 1853 according to Bavarian records; his brother David left Innsbruck after 1855 according to records seen by my correspondent in Innsbruck.

⁴⁴ See page 50 for contact information.

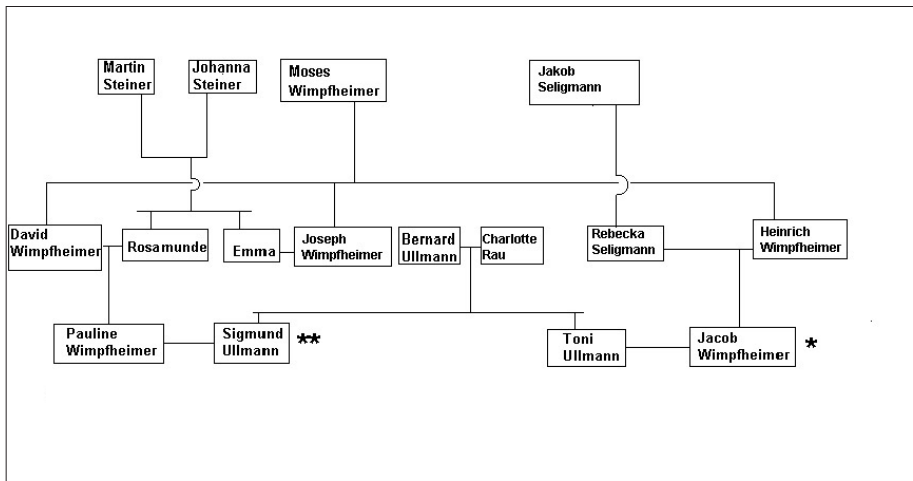


FIGURE 2: Revised version of extract from family tree constructed by H. Spittel. * Indicates Jacob Wimpfheimer, great-granduncle of H. Spittel, on his mother's side. ** Indicates Sigmund Ullmann, H. Spittel's grand uncle, on his father's side.

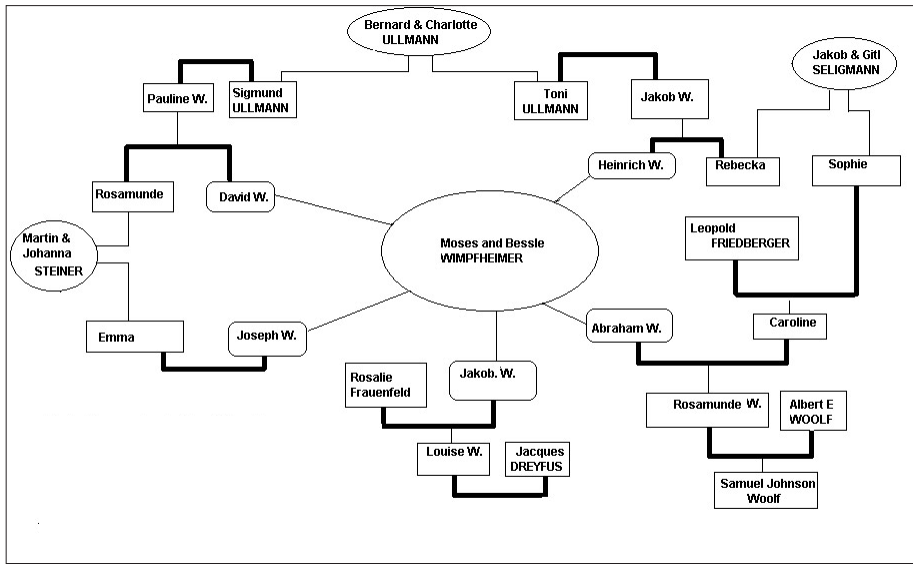


FIGURE 3: Diagram illustrating the relationships between some of the people mentioned in the text. Sons of Moses Wimpfheimer are shown in round cornered rectangles. Thick lines denote marriages. "W." refers to Wimpfheimer.

married to Johanna, and two of their children were Rosamunde and Emma. He told me that Rosamunde and Emma married two Wimpfheimer brothers from Ichenhausen: David and Joseph, respectively. David and Joseph Wimpfheimer and their Steiner brides migrated to Philadelphia.⁴³ As David, who married Rosamunde Steiner [see Table 3], was a brother of my mother's great-grandfather Heinrich, so also must have been Joseph, the husband of Emma Steiner. What I found in the US Federal Census may well refer to Joseph's family.

In the light of what I have discovered, I have prepared a revised version of Spittel's family tree [see Figure 2]. It appears that there was tight linking, by marriage, of three families with the Wimpfheimers. Two of Heinrich's brothers married two Steiner sisters, Heinrich and another brother married two members of the Seligmann family, and two of Moses Wimpfheimer's grandchildren married two of the Ullmann siblings. The diagram in Figure 3 illustrates this, and shows the way in which the principal "characters" in my story were related to each other.

To obtain more information about the family of my mother's great-grandfather I used a number of sources of information. I encountered various incidences of the name Wimpfheimer in a number of family trees, which at the outset did not have any obvious connection to each other. The notes to the entries in the diary of Pauline Ullmann and the autobiographical writing of S. J. Woolf hinted at a possible familial connection between the various

Wimpfheimers that I found. This connection was confirmed by information sent to me from the archives in Ichenhausen and Augsburg. Information that I received from Innsbruck provided confirmation of a hunch that arose from perusing the US Census.

It is now possible to construct a list of the descendants of Moses and Bessle Wimpfheimer of Ichenhausen, which is, I believe, more complete than any that may have preceded it. I would be very happy to send a copy to anyone with an interest in this.⁴⁴

THE HISTORY OF LOEBTREE.COM

BY DANIEL E. LOEB

The LoebTree.com website is one of the largest family trees available on the Web. It has about 22,000 names listed in it, mostly descendants of one of the ancestors of my wife Helen and me, including several branches purportedly going back to biblical times. In this article, I will discuss the origins of my family tree and describe how it has grown over the years. I will highlight some of the better known people listed in the family tree, and describe some interesting stories about how the family tree has helped people find long lost relatives.

ESCAPE FROM GERMANY

My father Stephen Gunther Loeb was born 19 July 1928 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. When his father Julius Loeb died 12 September 1932 as the result of a streetcar accident, my grandmother Jeanette Dannenberg (1902-1986) had to run the family business and support my father and his brother Norbert Hans Loeb.

These were difficult economic times in Germany but my grandmother's rare knowledge (for a woman of those times) of mathematics and foreign languages allowed her to earn a living in accounting and by translating documents during the depression. The same determination that enabled her to petition the Kaiser to have her two remaining brothers, Arthur and Julius Dannenberg, recalled from the battlefield following the death of her brothers Moses Manfred and Alfred Dannenberg, served her well as she took over the family business.

In 1934, my grandmother remarried Carl Oppenheimer (1895-1980) whom I knew as my Opa. In 1938, they made arrangements to escape Nazi Germany. They were waiting in Frankfurt for their departure date when a policeman warned them of their imminent arrest. They left immediately for Amsterdam from where they took a boat to the United States, joining Carl's sibling in Chicago, Illinois.

THE OPPENHEIMER CONNECTION

My connection to the Oppenheimer family had led me to a genealogical pursuit of their origin. Fortunately, shortly before his death in 1985, my father's cousin Al Oppenheimer introduced me to the family tree prepared by Samuel Dokow of Hemsbach in 1900 [shown on facing page], which includes my step-grandfather Carl Oppenheimer's father Moses Oppenheimer (1855-1929). This tree was based in part on Reb Issachar Oppenheimer's 1828/9 *Stammbaum*,¹ a family tree that shows how this branch of the Oppenheimer family descended from Moses Oppenheimer

Author Daniel Loeb and his wife Helen enjoy a joint family pedigree that illustrates the dictum that all Israel are brethren [*Chaverim Kol Yisrael*], having an Ashkenazic and Sephardic heritage respectively that traces back to biblical times. This rich legacy is captured in an unusual website that is well annotated and accessible to any researcher.

1 See www.loebtree.com/opp.html#io for more information on Reb Issachar Oppenheimer.

2 See www.loebtree.com/moise.html.

3 See www.loebtree.com/opp.html#cy.

4 See www.loebtree.com/maharal.html, and p. 374, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. X.

5 See *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. VII, p. 755.

6 See www.loebtree.com/berdugopm.html#raph1.

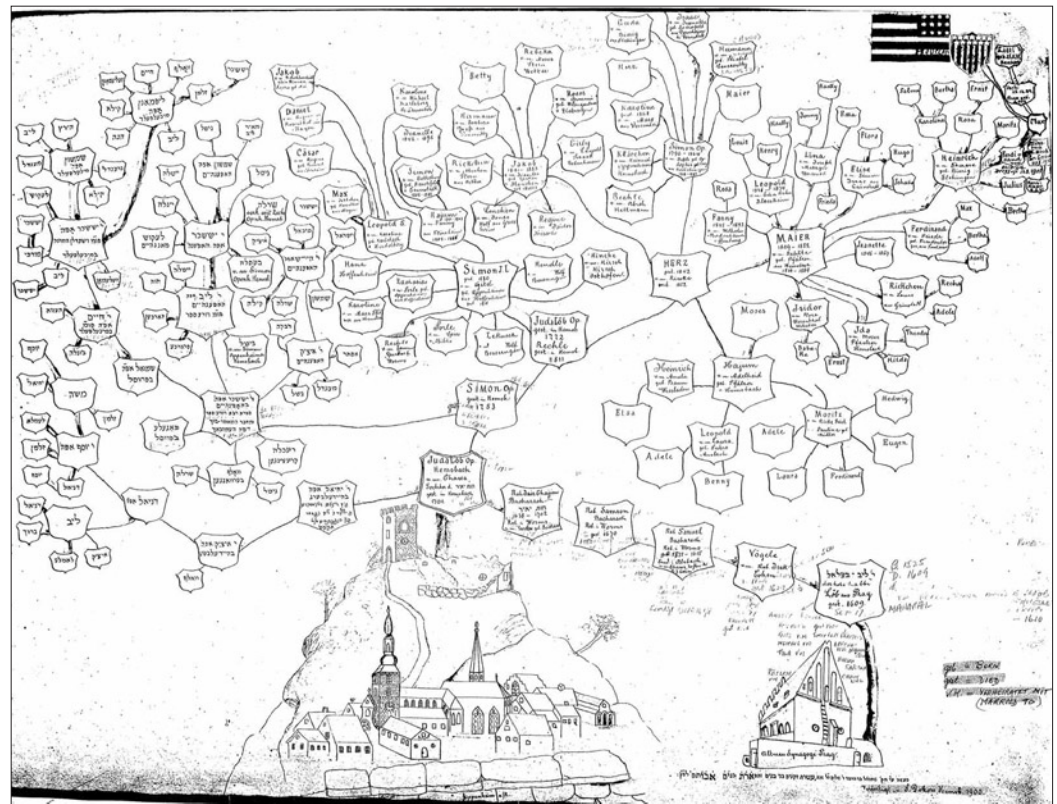
7 The three trees can be seen online at <http://www.loebtree.com/atree.html>, [/btree.html](http://www.loebtree.com/btree.html) or [/ctree.html](http://www.loebtree.com/ctree.html).

8 See www.loebtree.com/berdugo.html.

9 A partial list of major contributors includes: Alisa Sharon, Werner L. Frank, Alan Ehrlich, Arthur Levi, Bruno Bloch, Carol Adelman, Christoph Libisch, David Lewin, David Oppenheimer, Don Stone, Don McVittie, David Kelley, Bill Oppenheimer, James Eric Freedner, Meir Deutsch, David Hughes, Shlomo Barnea and Kurt Rose.

10 www.loebtree.com/oloeb.html#dmlw.

11 Oskar Dentai-Gomperz (b. 1881) was the son of Emil Gomperz (b. 1852), son of Nathan L. Gomperz (1824-



ABOVE: The "Dokow" tree of 1900 showing the origin and descent of the Oppenheimer family of Hemsbach, Germany. [See www.loebtree.com/dokow.html; branches are clickable for further details.]

(1855-1929).² This Moses Oppenheimer was the son of Jakob Oppenheimer (1801-1883), son of Herz Oppenheimer (1759-1842), son of Juda Loeb Oppenheimer (1720-1770), son of Rabbi Simeon Oppenheimer (d. 1753), son of Juda Loeb Oppenheimer (d. after 1701) and Chawa Bachrach (d. 1701). At this juncture, the ancestry splits in two important directions: The paternal branch passes up through the famous banking Oppenheimer family, while the maternal branch reaches back to the *Chavas Yoiv*, Rabbi Joir Chayim Bachrach (1638-1702),³ son of Rabbi (Moses) Samson Bachrach (1607-1670), son of Chava (Eva) Cohen (1580-1651), daughter of Voegele (d. 1629), daughter of The Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Judah (Jehuda) Loew (1525-1609).⁴

THE MAHARAL OF PRAGUE

The Maharal was the Chief Rabbi of Prague, a Talmudist, moralist, theologian, mathematician, and mystic. According to legend, the Maharal created the *Golem* at the *Altneuschul* synagogue in Prague to serve the Jewish community. This creature was brought to life from out of the dust by the insertion of God's name under its tongue, obeying Rabbi Judah's commands to help Jews survive anti-Jewish measures and blood libel accusations, and serving as a *Shabbos Goi*. Eventually it had to be destroyed and returned to dust because it ran amok on a Friday afternoon during *Kabbalat Shabbat* when Rabbi Judah forgot to remove the divine name from the mouth of the *Golem*. The remains of the *Golem* were sealed in the attic of the Altneu Synagogue in Prague. (This legend had been associated with Rabbi Elijah of Prague until the late 18th century.)⁵

THE BERDUGO TREE

In 1977, my wife's great uncle Rabbi Raphael Berdugo⁶ prepared a series of three hand-drawn family trees⁷ as the culmination of decades of research. These trees detail all of the male

descendants of the Berdugo family in Morocco starting from Rabbi Moshe Berdugo shortly after the Inquisition and the resulting exile from Spain and Portugal.

Rabbi Raphael Berdugo was the brother (and son-in-law) of Rabbi Mimoun Berdugo. They were both sons of Rabbi Abraham Berdugo, son of Petahiah Mordecai Berdugo, son of Yikutiel Berdugo, son of Rabbi Mordecai Berdugo, son of the “Angel” Rabbi Raphael Berdugo (1747-1821), son of Chief Rabbi Mordecai Berdugo Ha-Tzadik (b. 1715 or 1717, d. 1762 or 1763), son of Grande Sabio Rabbi Yossef Berdugo, son of Rabbi Itzhak Berdugo “Ha-Yachieh,” who was the son of Grand Sabio Rabbi Moshe Berdugo Hakadmon.⁸

ORGANIZING MY FAMILY DATA

The development of the Internet in the early 1990s encouraged me to put all of this data online. I completed entry of the extensive Dokow and Berdugo family trees by 1994. Recently, I acquired the LoebTree.com domain name, so the address should be permanently valid.

In 1994, the tree only included a few hundred names from the Dokow and Berdugo family trees together with interviews of family members. Since then the tree has grown exponentially in size. Interestingly, the growth has not come as a result of traditional genealogical research techniques, but rather from the Internet itself. Once my tree was online, people found the website either by following a link from another site, or more commonly by using a search engine to look up their name, or the names of other members of their family. I am indebted to these countless individuals, many with large family trees of their own, who have contacted me and contributed information to my website.⁹

MAKING CONNECTIONS

One of the most gratifying results in maintaining the family tree is in learning the surprising ways in which the tree has had a positive impact in other people’s lives. Here are three such amazing stories:

LOEB-WILLIAMS FAMILY. The mother of David Mark (Loeb) Williams¹⁰ died in a car wreck in 1952. Her doctor arranged for David’s adoption at birth. He discovered the identity of his natural family through LoebTree.com, and writes:

I was adopted at birth in Waco, TX, but the Loeb, my biological family, all came from the Philadelphia area and before that a tobacco plantation near Louisville, KY, having come to the United States in the mid-1800s. None in the family knew about me until about four years ago. I have four older siblings and two younger half siblings as well as a large number of first cousins in the Loeb family. I located my family via a website devoted to Loeb. A nephew in Guam had posted there a snippet of my immediate family tree and I was able to contact an uncle from the names listed. I have met Sue and another sister and both surviving uncles so far.

DENTAI-GOMPERZ FAMILY. Oskar Dentai-Gomperz¹¹ had children before and after immigrating to the USA. His children and grandchildren were living near each other but did not know of each other’s existence until recently. They plan to get together soon.

Thanks for your message. In the meantime, I met Ken and his [my] family. It is pretty amazing, I had no idea that my grandfather settled in the US sometime around 1914, and that I have uncles, aunts and a bunch of first cousins just a half an hour drive from where I happen to be living! My sister and I were told by our parents that every member of our extended family perished in the Holocaust. Suddenly we have this huge family — thanks to your website. — Andrew Denai

1881), son of Rabbi Loeb Lion Gomperz (1782-1849) and Mirjam (Miriam) Marie (Maria) Latzko. (See www.loebtree.com/gomperz.html for details.) Mirjam was the daughter of Moses Latzko, son of Bezalel Latzko Cohen, son of Chajim Cohen, son of Rabbi Jacob Mordechai Cohen, son of The Great Gaon Rabbi Naftoli II Katz Ha-Cohen, the Av Beth Din of Posen, the author of Semichus Chachomim, and son of Rabbi Isaac II Ha-Cohen, son of Rabbi Naftali Ha-Cohen, son of Voge, daughter of the Maharal of Prague. While Rabbi Loeb Lion Gomperz was the son of Benedikt Neumeger Gomperz, son of Miriam (Mirjam) Anna Wertheimer, daughter of Jehuda Loeb Wertheimer, son of Veronica (Frumet) Brilin, daughter of Isak Brilin (d. 1678), son of Rabbi Meschulam Eliezer Sussman Brilin (b. 1645), son of Isak.

¹² Margarethe von Gutmann was the daughter of Sofie Latzko (1839-1902), daughter of Modl Markus Latzko, son of Joachin Latzko (1780–1840), son of Bezalel Latzko Cohen, son of Chajim Cohen, son of Rabbi Jacob Mordechai Cohen, son of the great Gaon Rabbi Naftoli II Katz ha-Cohen, the Av Bais Din of Posen, the author of Semichus Chachomim, who was the son of Rabbi Isaac II Ha-Cohen, son of Voegele, daughter of the Maharal of Prague. See www.loebtree.com/latzkom.html.

¹³ www.loebtree.com/kings.html#david.

14 www.loebtree.com/hp.html.

15 www.loebtree.com/temoigne.jpg (Hebrew) or [/temoigne.html](http://www.loebtree.com/temoigne.html) (English and French).

16 www.loebtree.com/oppm.html#frba.

17 www.loebtree.com/rashi.html#rashi.

18 www.loebtree.com/yoseph.html.

19 www.loebtree.com/kings.html#hai.

20 www.loebtree.com/hophni.html#sam.

21 www.loebtree.com/famous.html.

KRAUSE FAMILY. This story involves Noah Kleiman, a Jewish boy and his apparently non-Jewish girlfriend Nicole Edson. Nicole discovered the death certificate of her grandmother Manon Krause. Nicole's mother and grandmother died when Nicole was 13 and 12. At the suggestion of Noah's mother Shawna Kleiman (who is an avid genealogist), she Googled the name of her great-grandmother Margarethe von Gutmann, which appeared on Manon's death certificate. Google directed her to my website where she was surprised to discover her ancestry¹² and the fact that her maternal grandmother was Jewish which, of course, made her Jewish. While she knew that her grandmother had fled Austria during WWII, she never guessed that she was Jewish.

Nicole's great-grandmother Margarethe von Gutmann prepared a birthday celebration for Nicole's great-grandfather Otto Krause featuring the famous opera singer Lotte Lehmann. Otto fell in love with Lotte Lehmann, and divorced Margarethe so that he could marry Lotte and follow her around the world while his children remained in Vienna with Margarethe. The children were barely able to escape the Nazis with help from Lotte Lehmann. Otto Kraus died soon after they escaped.

The story ends happily, as Nicole has reclaimed her Jewish heritage, and will marry Noah Kleiman.

BIBLICAL CONNECTIONS

The name Berdugo is a variation of *Verge di Oro* [the golden scepter], or *Sharbit Hazahav*, in Portuguese. According to family tradition the family descends from Rabbi Boustani Gaon, descendant of King David¹³ and the High Priests.¹⁴ (One of his books was entitled *The Golden Scepter*.) According to David Kelley, *Boustani* means "sprout" in Persian, just as does the name Berdugo in Portuguese, for Boustani was believed to be the last surviving branch of the royal family of Judah.

This claim is supported by an official document.¹⁵ However, this document is not a detailed *Yichus* document enumerating the connections between each generation and the next. Instead it is simply the testimony of a witness, Moshe Pardo, who claims to have seen such a document with certifications by leading rabbis of each generation.

If this document is to be believed, we can hope to one day rediscover the detailed *Yichus* testimony to which Moshe Pardo refers. Until then, this is only a general statement that the Berdugo clan descends from King David. However, this is not surprising; in light of the mathematics of exponential growth, and with the large number of descendants of King David and King Solomon, it is quite likely that all Israelites were descendants of King David by the time of the Diaspora.

My ancestor Simon Wolf Oppenheim and his mother Frumet Ballin¹⁶ are thought to be descendants of King David through the famous Jewish commentator Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (1040-1105), known as Rashi¹⁷ and his ancestor, the early rabbinic sage Hillel Hazaken (b. 1st century B.C.E., d. 1st century C.E.).

This claim is better documented than the Berdugo claim, yet it leaves several important gaps:

— A gap of about 20 generations between Elyakum son of Aharon Haroff and Shlomo father of Itzhak Tzarfarti

— A gap of two generations between Gamliel Hazaken and Yochanan Hasandler

— A gap of two generations between the daughter of Matityahu Treves (who married Raphael Ballin) and Elias Ballin

The Luria family mentioned in my family tree also claims connections to Rashi.

My first and best documented connection to King David comes from the *Yichus* Letter in

1643 BERDUGO	50 FRAENKEL
1303 OPPENHEIMER/OPPENHEIM	49 WEINGARTNER
864 LOEB/LOB	49 DAHAN
563 HALBERSTAM	48 ROSENBERG
468 EGER	48 ABITBOL/ABITEBOUL/ABUTBUL
306 COHEN	47 SOFER
291 WERTHEIMER	47 DAVIDSOHN/DAVIDSON
260 WOLF	46 PAPPENHEIM
234 RABINOWITZ	46 LATZKO
220 TOLEDANO	46 HASSINE
207 SEBBAG/SEBAG-MONTEFIORE	46 SALOMON/SOLOMON
192 STARR	44 STRAUSS
178 ESKELES	44 RUBINSTEIN
178 BOTBOL	44 MARCUS
171 SHNEURSOHN/SHNEURSON/SHNEURI	44 KAUFMANN
166 BLOCH	43 DEHN
164 LEVY/LEVI	42 WECHSLER
154 FEUCHTWANGER	42 FRIEDMANN
146 TWERSKI/TVERSKY/TVERSKY	41 CARO
145 HOROWITZ	40 COHEN SCALI
139 BONDI	38 TAUBER
124 FRANKEL	37 PIETRKOWSKI
120 WEINBERGER	37 FRANKEL THEOMIM
116 SCHLESINGER	37 BACHRACH
113 GOMPERZ	36 SACHS
113 DEUTSCH	36 MILLER
109 FELDMAN	36 FRIEDMAN
109 HIRSCH/HIRSH	36 FLORSHEIM
108 LOEW/LOEWE/LOEW-BEER	35 SLONIM
106 SHARON	34 SIMON
103 CAHEN/CAHN/CAHAN	34 PFAELZER
102 STERNBERG	34 KAUDERS
101 GOLDSTOFF	34 BAER
100 RUBIN	33 ROTHSCHILD
99 KAMINER	33 MARRACHE
93 SCHIFF	33 LOEWENTHAL
91 COHEN-SCALI	33 LEIB
89 SABBAH	33 CITRON
87 MAIER	32 ROSENFELD
83 ALTER	32 FRANK
81 HALPHEN	32 BLEICHRODE
79 LEWIN	31 SINGER
78 DANNENBERG	31 SELDIS
78 BRANDEIS/BRANDES/BRANDIS	31 KLEIN
76 WEISS	30 WOHLWILL
74 SPIRA	30 SCHREIBER
73 TEOMIM	29 STADLER
67 WARBURG	29 SCHOENFELD
67 POLLAK	29 OPPLER
65 SCHWARTZ	28 WACHENHEIMER
62 COHN	28 ROSENBAUM
61 STERN	28 KAHN
58 TEITELBAUM	28 GROSS
58 OULIF	28 ELBAZ
58 MIRELS	28 AZOGUI
57 SILBERFELD	28 ALBERTI & variants
56 KATZ	27 WEIN
55 HACKENBROCH	27 SHAPIRO
54 FRANKEL-TEOMIM	27 SEKULA
52 BRILIN	
52 BENSIMON	
50 SPITZER	

possession of the Sans Hassidim as recorded in *The Eskeles Genealogy* by Zeev Eshkolot. The Gaon R. Yoseph I (d. ca. 1064)¹⁸ was an ancestor of the Maharal. According to the Yichus Letter, Yoseph I was the son of Rav Khai Gaon.¹⁹ However, in Hai's eulogy, Samuel Ha-Nagid said that Hai left no child. Perhaps this simply meant that Samuel's son R. Yoseph I had already passed away. Alternatively, according to David Hughes, Yoseph was rather the son of Samuel Ha-Nagid,²⁰ and Hai married a daughter of Samuel Ha-Nagid (Gaon of the Sura Academy, 997-1013).

It is worth bearing in mind that, for a genealogy 125 generations long, even if each link has a 99% chance of being correct, the entire chain has only a 28% chance of being correct. Moreover, the 99% figure may very well be extremely over-optimistic given the social advantages at various times for certain groups of people to have shown creativity in their own genealogy.

These long lists of descendants should not be taken too seriously. They are fun to consider. They might not be 100% correct, but in all likelihood, we are all descended from King David in some way although perhaps we will never know exactly how.

OTHER FAMOUS PEOPLE

In addition to the famous rabbis and biblical figures alluded to above, my family tree mentions many famous people,²¹ such as the physicists Albert Einstein and J. Robert Oppenheimer, Moroccan cabinet minister Shlomo Berdugo, Royal Jeweler Samuel Cohen-Scali, Israeli President Zalman Shazar, Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs Jacob Moses Toledano, Moroccan Senator Maitre Salomon Sebbag, General Secretary of Histadrut Uri Sebbag, Court Jew Samuel Oppenheimer, baseball player and owner Bill Starr, Financiers Joseph Sebbag-Montefiore and his uncle Sir Moses Montefiore, violinist Yehuda Menuhin, fashion designer Ralph Lauren, film producer Raphael Berdugo, and Anne Frank.

CONCLUSION

For more details on topics discussed, please visit the website or contact the author. I hope that you will enjoy perusing my family tree and perhaps find your place within it. If you do, please tell me, so that I can update the tree accordingly. It is thanks to my visitors that I have been able to expand my tree.

If you agree with how helpful it is to put your tree on the web, I encourage you to do so with your own website, on JewishGen.org's Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP) or some other site. Good luck!



THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF SAMUEL OPPENHEIMER

BY PETER STEIN

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE ARNSTEIN

Samuel Oppenheimer, Court Jew and military contractor, began his career in Heidelberg as a purveyor to the elector, Karl Ludwig, and as a tax collector of Palatinate Jewry. This essay deals with a time in his later career when his success and fortune brought him great fame and misfortune, as his business acumen and extraordinary capabilities would be no match for the anti-Semitism and greed of the times.

This is a shortened, edited version of an article by Peter Stein which appeared originally in German in *Regio-Familienforscher*, Basel, 16/4, December 2003.

The author is a direct descendant of Samuel Oppenheimer and Rabbi Jakob Guggenheim and recalls their memory on this 300th and 200th anniversary of their respective deaths. A major work by Max Grunwald describes the life and times of Samuel Oppenheimer.¹

When, after nine years of war, the Treaty of Rijswijk was signed on 20 September 1697, it was a difficult day for Emperor Leopold I von Habsburg; he had to acknowledge French dominion over Alsace, had to give up Strassburg (Strasbourg), although he reacquired places on the right bank of the Rhine such as Freiburg and Philippsburg, as well as the fortresses Breisach, Kehl, Hüningen und Fort Louis. On the left bank he retained Augst (formerly the Roman outpost Augusta Raurica), Rheinfelden and Laufenburg.

Austria, still suffering from the Thirty Years War (1618-48), became increasingly indebted as it fought the Turks who advanced clear to Vienna in 1683. Then came the War of Spanish Succession. While maintaining its dominion over parts of today's Germany, Alsace and Switzerland, known then as Vorderoesterreich, the Austrian treasury became empty; troops went unpaid and even hungry.

SAMUEL OPPENHEIMER (21 JUNE 1630–14 APRIL 1703)

On 6 June 1670, Emperor Leopold expelled the Jews from Vienna, despite their pivotal role as a source of funds, such as loans and special tax levies for the imperial treasury. One of the first Jews to return and settle in Vienna was Samuel Oppenheimer. His forebears had been evicted from Frankfurt am Main in 1612. We know next to nothing about his father, Simeon. We cannot even be certain of Samuel's place of birth (most often, it is deemed to be Heidelberg, mostly because he sometimes referred to himself as Judt von Haydtberg).

Before Oppenheimer's move to Vienna, the Palatine Prince, Karl Ludwig, launched Samuel's career when he named him as his agent [*Armeelieferant*]. Upon reaching Vienna in 1672, he became a supplier to the Habsburg imperial army of munitions, provisions, oats and flour. He made himself indispensable to the throne, becoming the court agent [*kaiserlicher Hoffaktor*] of the Emperor. The debt reached three million guilder. With repayments of his loans at a slow pace, Oppenheimer faced his own bankruptcy. Soon he was accused of having duped the treasury and was arrested in 1683 along with his son and his assistant. Although this impaired his own credit and created doubts among his creditors who were accustomed to his prompt payments, he continued, from jail, to arrange for supplies for the defenders of Vienna. Half a year later he was released.

Pope Innocent XI sent the Emperor 50,000 guilder to assist in the war against the Turks. With these funds Oppenheimer arranged for a crew of 52 to man ships and floats to transport oats and other supplies down the Danube — from Ulm (an imperial city) to Vienna, in time for the start of the battle for Vienna on 12 September 1682. He also furnished for the troops clothing, horses to move the artillery pieces, and ammunition, so that by March 1684 his claims amounted to an additional 187,000 guilder.

AT LEFT: Samuel Oppenheimer (1630-1703). Courtesy Bildarchiv der Oesterreichischen Nationalbibliothek.

Samuel Oppenheimer was arrested again on 19 September 1697 because of an alleged murder plot, creating a panic among his creditors. Due to lack of evidence he was released on 5 October. He resumed his massive shipments but was paid only with drafts against future taxes.

THE LOOTING

The welfare of the army and the fate of the court and state, were in the hands of a Jew who furnished payrolls and supplies down to the buttons on a soldier's uniform — a central role which was disliked by the population of Vienna.

On 21 July 1700, a Jewish member of the Oppenheimer household was alleged to have laughed at two chimney sweeps who were enjoying a game in front of a nearby inn. One of the players responded with a then common anti-Jewish gesture (he knocked repeatedly on the bench with his hand).² When he did not desist, the local guards intervened — this, in turn, agitated the local population which responded by throwing eggs and stones at the windows of the Oppenheimer house.

The nearby municipal guard stood by and watched the disturbances. This apathy then led to the looting and demolition of the house, destruction of the furnishings, even the wine barrels, and especially the business records. Residents of the house managed to find refuge in a cellar until the castle guard intervened, shooting into the crowd and wounding a dozen, some near death. They brought in some cannons and caught a few ringleaders that same night. A chimney sweep and a metal worker were hung in an iron cage over the entrance of the looted home; as a deterrent, the corpses were left hanging until the next day.

Oppenheimer suffered an enormous loss because of the destruction of important documents. During a judicial inquiry he was asked for precise data about transactions with the imperial finance ministry, but he lacked the necessary records to make his claim. Despite Oppenheimer's massive existing claims against the emperor he undertook additional loans. When Hungary under Rakoczy revolted, Oppenheimer administered the supplies and furnished guns for which he was paid with the scrap iron left by the French in Phillipsburg after the Treaty of Rijswijk.

In 1702, the court acknowledged that Oppenheimer was the only remaining source of loans. But Oppenheimer was in trouble, because he relied on future taxes and doubtful claims for their repayment. His own financing came from aristocrats and religious dignitaries unwilling to do business with the Emperor openly.

Oppenheimer became quite ill and died of a lung infection on 14 April 1703. The treasury declared his estate as bankrupt.

Despite Oppenheimer's immeasurable services to the emperor, he was not allowed to establish a synagogue in his home nor did he receive the gold necklace of honor [*Gnadenkette*] he had been promised numerous times.

Samuel Oppenheimer was married twice. He had ten children. A daughter, Frommet (d. 1713), married Josef Guggenheim (d.1735), the patriarch of the Guggenheim family. These Guggenheims lived in Frankfurt am Main in the *Haus zum Rost*. One of their sons, Abraham Guggenheim (d. 1766) had a daughter Frommet (1737-1812), who married (despite his crippled condition) the philosopher and reformer Moses Mendelssohn. Their grandson was the famous composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

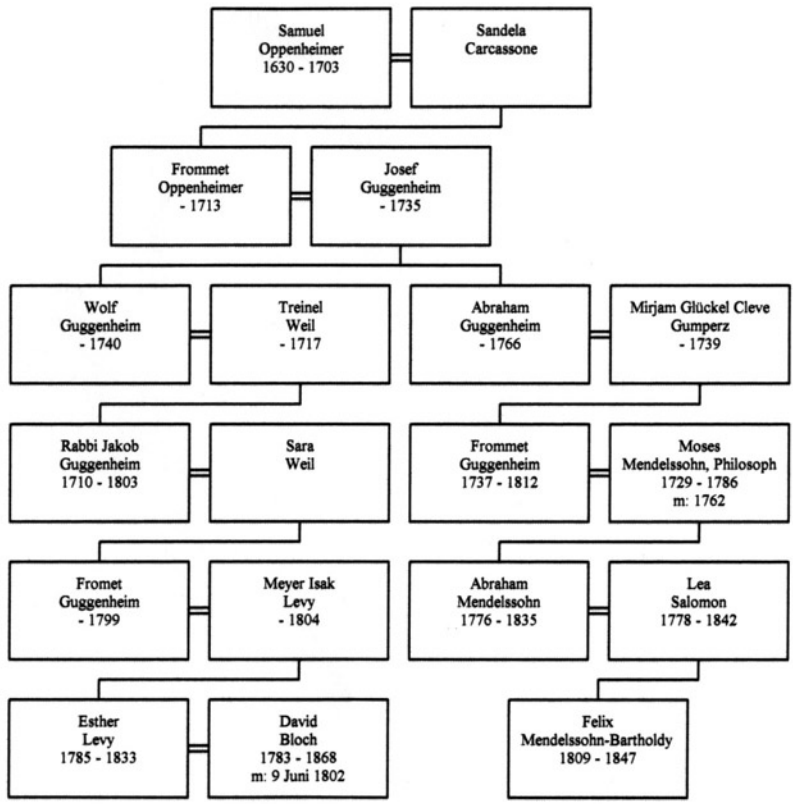
Wolf Guggenheim, a son of Josef and Frommet Guggenheim, settled in Obernai in Alsace. His son Jakob Guggenheim (1710-1803) was regional rabbi for the lower Alsace with his seat in Haguenau.

1 Max Grunwald, *Samuel Oppenheimer und sein Kreis*, Wien und Leipzig, 1913.

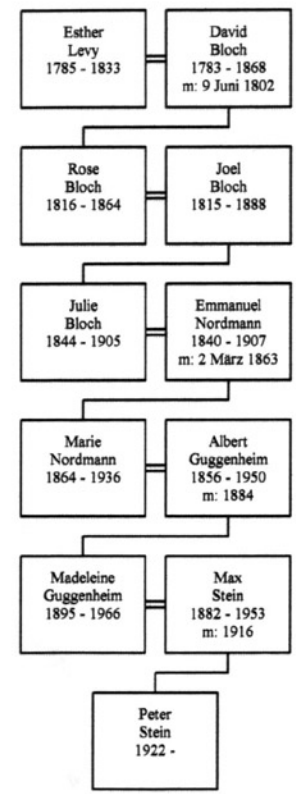
2 This gesture is described in J. J. Schudt's *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1714. Band III, S. 239.

AT RIGHT: Trees illustrating how Peter Stein is a direct descendant of Samuel Oppenheimer and is related to Rabbi Jakob Guggenheim and Moses Mendelssohn.

Descendants of Samuel Oppenheimer



Descendants of Esther Levy



MAKING CONNECTIONS: A GERMAN-JEWISH VILLAGE IN AMERICA

HOW GENEALOGICAL DOCUMENTS IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICA AND GERMANY REVEAL AN EXTENDED FAMILY IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA

BY EMILY C. ROSE

As we all know, researching one's family history and writing are solitary pursuits. When my book was published in German and then in English, I was not prepared for the incredibly positive reaction to my research. I received telephone calls, e-mails, and letters from all over the world. Subsequent publicity about the book, my presentations, and my website attracted even more communications.

I always responded, and in many cases was able to find information to answer queries about ancestors and native villages and towns. Not surprisingly, I was usually the one providing the genealogical or historical documents. One casual communication, however, gave me information that led to research that shed new light on a short sentence in my book: "Shortly after his arrival [in 1848], Simson [Berlizheimer] married Nanette Loewenthal, who had also emigrated from Württemberg."¹

In 2002, I received a call from a reader. He wanted to share with me the coincidence that his ancestor was the first president of the Jewish Publication Society, the organization that had published my book. He mentioned that he had a chronicle written by his ancestor when he first came to America in the 1850s. I asked him to send it to me as I love reading memoirs.

I started reading the six-page typed memoir.² Moritz Neuburger wrote that he was born in Haigerloch in the Principality of Hohenzollern, where his grandfather had been the cantor and his deceased father had served as the teacher. Since my family was from the neighboring village of Mühringen, in the kingdom of Württemberg, I had visited Haigerloch as a tourist. I continued reading. After Moritz arrived in America in 1854, he worked for his Burgauer, Wolf, and Levi cousins (from Haigerloch and nearby Hechingen) who were living in Ft. Adams and Woodville, Mississippi. Then came the key sentence: "In the meantime, Henry Burgauer had concluded to leave the South. He had a cousin named Lowenthal living in Rock Island, Ill.... This was in the spring of 1856."

Using the usual American sources (censuses, city directories, photographs, and family interviews), I knew that my Berlizheimer ancestors had emigrated in the 1840s and 1850s and settled in Chicago. What I had discovered during my five summers of research in the German archives was that the documents there could shed even more light on immigration and life in America.

From a document I had found in the inheritance and estate records (*Testamente* and *Erbschaftsunterlagen*) in the Mühringen village archive, I had learned that Simson and Nanette had settled in Davenport, Iowa. A notarized document stated that Simson, living in Davenport, renounced his uncle's inheritance. These letters and affidavits in the inheritance records contain a wealth of information about the children, nieces, and nephews of the deceased.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I asked Rose about the reaction she received to her book, *Portraits of Our Past: Jews of the German Countryside*, published in 2001 (reviewed in *Stammbaum 21*, Summer 2002). One response from a German reader led to the discovery of a distant cousin who was the founder of the Berlitz School of Languages. Now she relates communications from another reader, which opened new avenues of connecting distant cousins. Once again, Emily used her successful strategy for research to uncover a network of families in Germany and the American Midwest in the mid-nineteenth century.

Research guidelines for those pursuing Jewish genealogical investigations in Germany are available in the section "A Blueprint for Researchers," in the author's book, *Portraits of Our Past: Jews of the German Countryside*. An extended bibliography, a model family history interview, and other research information may also be found on her website, www.portraitsourpast.com.

1 Emily C. Rose, *Portraits of Our Past: Jews of the German Countryside*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia: 2001, p. 233.

2 Morris Newburger, "Memoir to 1856." Private collection, Herbert Kaufmann.

3 Fleishaker, Oscar. "The Illinois-Iowa Jewish Community on the Banks of the Mississippi River": Ph.D. diss., Yeshiva Univ., 1957. H.F. Kett & Co., *The Past and Present of Rock Island County, IL*, Chicago: H.F. Kett, 1877.

4 Ira Glazier and P. William Filby, eds., *German to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at US Ports, Vol. 8*, September 1854, p. 197.

5 Jonathan D. Sarna, *The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia: 1989, pp. 22-23.

BELOW: Solomon Löwenthal, Cantor in Mühlingen (b. 1797 Mühlingen, d. 1867 Mühlingen). Private collection, Elinor Eidelman.



I checked with my relatives; no one had known of any family member who had ever lived in Davenport. Nevertheless, I was able to find information about Simson of Davenport in books about the town and in city directories from the 1850s. I tracked Simson to Davenport and across the Mississippi River to Rock Island, Illinois. In those sources, I found mention of Berthold Löwenthal and several Rosenfelds whose names I recognized from documents I had gathered in Mühlingen.

I had always wondered whether Berthold Löwenthal was related to Simson's wife. Sometimes the family registers note the name of a child's husband when she married someone from another place, but I never found Nanette Löwenthal in any register. Nanette's death certificate stated that she was from Württemberg, but I never found a document with any mention of Mühlingen. Prior to receiving the memoir, one of my newly discovered cousins had answered that question. She sent me a handwritten Lowenthal family tree that listed the marriage of Nanette and my ancestor, Simson (Samson) Berlizheimer.

Next question: Was the "Lowenthal cousin" in the Neuburger memoir the same Berthold Löwenthal from Mühlingen?

The connections began, but neither easily nor clear-cut. Through genealogical research using records from Southwest Germany, and censuses, address books, and R.G. Dun and Co. credit rating reports in America, I discovered a complex web of family connections in Germany and America. Single men and women, families with children and elderly parents emigrated in the 1840s and 1850s from four neighboring villages: Haigerloch, Hechingen, Mühlingen and Nordstetten. Although books about the Jewish communities in Rock Island and Davenport did not fit genealogical data and connections into their research, it turned out that a large percentage of the Jews in these communities were related to each other.³

I first contacted all the families listed in the memoir and in books about Rock Island, as well as relevant families listed in the Jewish Family Finder on JewishGen.org. Most of the first-generation immigrants had changed the spelling of their surnames: Neuburger to Newburger, Burgauer to Burgower, and Löwenthal to Lowenthal or Loewenthal, etc. We formed a small e-mail group, and everyone generously sent me their family trees and photographs. Through this group, cousins were reconnected, and people discovered distant cousins unknown until then.

In 2003, I returned to Germany to do more research. I located Jewish family registers in the Stuttgart State Archive for the families involved and looked at the birth, death, and marriage registers. In Haigerloch, I copied the cemetery documentation citations and the trade register pages for the families. I looked at the information I had previously collated for Mühlingen, especially the apprenticeship records and family registers.

Even with these data, there was a missing link. Who was Henry Burgauer's Lowenthal cousin? How were the Burgauers related to the Löwenthals in Germany? From the family trees and family registers I received, I learned that Sara Burgauer's parents were Hinle Burgauer (Haigerloch) and Bella Levi (Mühlingen) and that Sara's brothers were Michael and Henry. Thus, Henry Burgauer's father was Hinle Burgauer and his mother was Bella Levi (Levi). Another tree showed that Bella Levi's father was Hajum (Haiman) Levi, the cantor in Mühlingen.

In 1828, when Jews in the kingdom of Württemberg were obligated to take surnames, the prior and new surnames were listed in several places. People had to sign official lists indicating their former and new surname, and this list was published. In the documents I had found that most of the Levi family in Mühlingen adopted Löwenthal as a family name. Thus Bella Levi was Bella Löwenthal. Further evidence was an old photograph identified as "Sol, the brother of Henry Burgower's mother." Since Bella Levi (Löwenthal) had a brother named Solomon, the photograph was of Solomon Löwenthal, Mühlingen's cantor for over fifty years.

I discovered more connections. In the Morris Newburger memoir, Moses Regensburger (Haigerloch), his wife Sara Burgauer (Haigerloch), and their children came on the same ship to America as Morris Newburger in 1854.⁴ Morris Newburger's mother was Auguste Regensburger,

sister of Moses Regensburger. A Burgauer cousin had an old photo of one of Morris's two brothers who had emigrated a few years later, but she had no idea of the family connection until now.

There were connections with other Jews from diverse places who also settled in Davenport and Rock Island. Berthold Loewenthal's half-sister married Judas Ochs in Nordstetten; they emigrated with their children and were joined by her father-in-law and brothers-in-law. His other half-sisters married a Heinsfurter and a Heidenheimer from Mühlingen. Several Rosenfelds from Mühlingen settled in Rock Island — they were related to the Ulmanns in Haigerloch and the Epsteins from Mühlingen. And on and on.

In most cases, the men formed small businesses together in Rock Island and Davenport. Eighteen men also joined together to establish Congregation Bene Israel [Bnai Israel] in Davenport in 1861; the minutes of the congregation were in German.

Of course, not everything is neatly tied up. I still wonder if an "A. Rosenfeld" listed in Davenport in 1856 was the brother-in-law of Simson Berlzheimer and cousin of all the other Rosenfelds who settled there. There are also still several unconnected Burgauers and Epsteins.

So how did a recent immigrant become one of the founders and the first president of the Jewish Publication Society? Morris Newburger married a Hochstädter from Hechingen (related to many Hochstädters in Haigerloch) and joined the Hochstadter brothers in Philadelphia where he prospered in men's clothing and then banking businesses. Since Morris's ancestors had been teachers and cantors, he continued to pursue that interest in America and was chosen to lead the Jewish Publication Society in Philadelphia in 1896.⁵

It is often said in jest that all German Jews are related. I have found profound truth in this statement so that in all stages of research we need to look beyond just our direct-line-ancestors for extended family connections. This open-ended mindset will lead to new and fruitful avenues of research.

In the interest of furthering genealogical discovery, I always encourage each person to place all memoirs, letters and photographs in public archives like the Leo Baeck Institute, and to publish his or her research. In this way other people can use the information already collected, and from there, you just never know.



AT TOP: Berthold Newburger (b. 1830 Haigerloch, d. 1909 St. Louis). Private collection, Elinor Eidelman.

ABOVE: Morris Newburger (b. 1834 Haigerloch, d. 1917 Philadelphia). Private collection, Herbert Kaufmann.

RECONNECTING JEWISH ROOTS: THE SEARCH FOR MY GERMAN-JEWISH HELFT FAMILY

BY REBECCA RECTOR

I did not grow up as a Jew, but I always had a vague awareness that I had some Jewish heritage. My grandmother was first married to a Jewish man named Julius Helft, but he left her shortly after their second child was born, never to be seen again. The separation was not discussed much in the family. My grandmother later obtained a divorce from Julius and remarried. Her new husband, John Rector, adopted the two children (my father and his sister).

Decades later, when my father was in his seventies, he became curious about his biological father. Where was Julius born and where did he go after he left? Did he remarry? Thus began my genealogical quest in the 1980s to find my grandfather, and eventually trace the Helft family back to their roots in Anhalt, Germany. The research took a very circuitous route at times, as I had virtually no family documents, and most of the men in the family were traveling salesmen who moved frequently. Julius had also changed his name and identity after he left, which further complicated matters.

I knew that my grandparents had lived in Indianapolis, Indiana, so I began my search there. Their marriage application from 1918¹ gave me the first clues with respect to my grandfather's heritage. Julius was born on 11 May 1897 in Montreal, Canada; his father was Walter Helft, born in Koenigsberg, Germany, and his mother was Gertrude Schwartz, born in Berlin [see photographs on page 38]. As there are several Koenigsbergs in Germany, I spent many months, off and on, looking for the correct one through LDS films, a query in Heritage Quest, and searching through the JewishGen.org, without any definitive results.

Giving up that line of enquiry for a while, I began searching census records, passenger lists, and Canadian birth records. Census records revealed the following:

- **1900.** Three-year-old Julius was found in Louisville, Kentucky, with his mother Gertrude, his brother Leonard (age two), Gertrude's parents (Benjamin and Johanna Schwartz) and her siblings Isadore and Elizabeth Schwartz. Walter was absent; he was probably traveling on business.

- **1910.** Walter and Gertrude were in Cincinnati, Ohio. Julius was 12, his siblings Leonard, Johanna, Nathan and Theodore were eleven, seven, four, and two.

- **1920.** Julius, now 23, was living in Indianapolis, Indiana, with his wife, Dorothy Delbrook (my grandmother) and her family. He was a salesman with the Atlas Paper Co. Walter was also in Indianapolis, listed as a salesman, with wife Gertrude; Johanna, 15; Nathan, 13; and Theodore, 12.

Passenger lists proved to be another tough problem. Since Julius was supposedly born in Montreal in 1897, I began searching through the Hamburg Indexes for 1897 and surrounding years, but never could find Walter and Gertrude's immigration. I also searched through volumes of *Germans to America*, the Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, the St. Albans Canadian border crossings, and the Ellis Island website, all with negative results.

The search for a Montreal birth certificate, including traveling to the Quebec Vital Records Office, also proved negative. It was later discovered that Walter and Gertrude had married in Clark Co., Indiana on 29 March 1896,² so the probability of Julius being born the next year in Montreal was suspect. However, the fact that his mother signed his marriage application in 1918, which listed his birth as Montreal, is strong evidence that he was in fact born there even though no official records have been found.

A few years ago, I discovered that there were still some Helfts living in Indianapolis, and I knew that they were probably relatives of Julius's brothers. With the help of a local genealogist, I was able to make contact with some family members. I then learned more about Julius — he had changed his name to Walter Davis, remarried Harriet DeGrof and died in Florida. He had taken his father's first name, Walter, and a non-German surname. This is not too surprising as this was shortly after WWI, when many Germans were taking English sounding names. From this name change information, I was then able to find his death certificate and obituary in Florida in 1978, and also his Social Security application. Several good clues came from the Social Security application, which showed a Walter Davis living in Newark, New Jersey, in 1936.³ I knew this was the correct person, since his mother's name was listed as Gertrude Schwartz. A search of Newark City Directories revealed that "Walter Davis," salesman, had been living there, on North Seventh since at least 1925. There was also the possibility of yet another wife, as he was listed with a woman named Bela from 1937 to 1943 at the same address. To date, however, no marriage record has been found in New Jersey.

Two additional lucky breaks helped to advance the research in both Kentucky and Germany. The first was an e-mail from a young Helft woman who turned out to be a granddaughter of Julius' brother Leonard. From her, I learned of a Helft memoir that had been privately published; she was willing to lend me her copy. From this manuscript, I discovered that Walter Helft had a sister Ida, who was born in Germany and who married Hyman Goldstein. They lived in Louisville. Since my Schwartz family had also lived in Louisville, this seemed a good avenue for further research.

Through the help of a local researcher, I obtained city directories, naturalizations, vital records and cemetery records. Through these I found Ida's marriage to Hyman Goldstein in Louisville in 1889,⁴ plus their children's names. Census records revealed several other Helft families in Louisville who are most likely relatives, though a direct link has not yet been found. Cemetery records indicated that Ida Helft Goldstein, Hyman Goldstein, Gertrude Schwartz Helft, and her parents Benjamin and Johanna Schwartz were all buried at the Temple Cemetery of Congregation Adath Israel Brith Shalom, in Louisville. An added bonus was Johanna's gravestone, written in Hebrew, which gave her place of birth as Lessen, Germany. Here was another avenue for research in Germany. As many of the other Helft's in Louisville were also buried at the Temple Cemetery, this further strengthens the possible connection.

The second break came when I hired Nancy Grossman through JewishGen.org. From her home base in Frankfurt, Germany she has been working on my Helft and related families for the past several years. She started with the Koenigsberg in East Prussia that is now Kaliningrad, Russia, and researched the Koenigsberg civil records from the Brillling Collection located at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt. There she found a Bendix Helft who was married to a Marianne Schmidt — vital records later confirmed that this Bendix was in fact the father of my Walter, born Salomon Walter Helft on 26 July 1871 in Koenigsberg.⁵ Birth records were also found for his other siblings, including his sister Ida. When we saw that the record for Walter's marriage in Indiana listed his mother as Mary Schmidt, we knew we had the correct family.

1 Marion Co. Indiana Marriage Index, application for marriage license, 30 March 1918.

2 Clark Co. Indiana Marriages, 29 March 1896, Book S, Pg. 36.

3 Social Security application for "Walter Davis" (a.k.a. Julius Helft), No. 2027, dated 27 Nov 1936.

4 Jefferson Co. Kentucky Marriages, 15 December 1889, vol. 15, pg. 320.

5 Koenigsberg Civil Records, Brillling Collection at Frankfurt Museum, Frankfurt, Germany, PSR A176. Researched by Nancy Grossman [msgnan@freenet.de].

6 St. Georg Evangelical Church records, Ploetzkau. Researched by Grossman.

7 St. Georg Evangelical Church records, Ploetzkau. Researched by Grossman.

8 *Landeshauptarchiv*, Sachsen-Anhalt, Abt. Bernberg, C 15 No. 3/7, C 1c No. 6, and C 1c No. 7. Researched by Grossman.

APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE LICENSE MALE.

Application is hereby made for a license for the marriage of

Julius Helft to *Dorothy Dellbrook*

UPON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF FACTS RELATIVE TO SAID PARTIES:

1. The full Christian and surname of the man is *Julius Helft*
2. Color *White* 3. Where born *Montreal Canada*
4. When born *May 11, 1897*
5. Present residence *1402 Union St, Indianapolis Ind*
6. Present occupation *Druggist*
7. If no occupation, what means has the man's contracting party to support a family?
8. Is the male contracting party of nearer blood kin to the female contracting party than second cousin? *no*
9. Full Christian and surname of father *Walter Helft*
10. His color? *White* 11. His birthplace *Koenigsberg Germany*
12. His occupation *Salesman* 13. His residence *1402 Union St Ind*
14. Full Christian and maiden name of mother *Gertude Schwartz Helft*
15. Her color *White* 16. Her occupation *Housewife*
17. Her birthplace *Berlin Germany* 18. Her residence *1402 Union St City*
19. Has the male contracting party been an inmate of any county asylum or home for indigent persons within the last five years? *no*
20. If so, is he now able to support a family and likely to so continue?
21. Is this his first marriage? *Yes*
22. If not, how often has he been married?
23. Has such prior marriage, or marriages, been dissolved?
24. If so, how? 25. When?
26. Is the male contracting party afflicted with epilepsy, tuberculosis, venereal, or any other contagious or transmissible disease? *no*
27. Is he an imbecile, feeble-minded, idiotic or insane, or is he under guardianship as a person of unsound mind? *no*

Signature of applicant *Julius Helft*

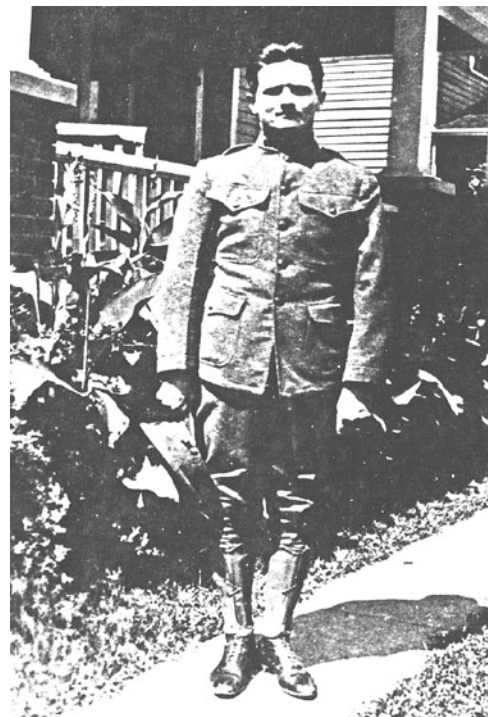
State of Indiana, Marion County, ss:

The undersigned *Gertude Helft* deposes and swears that *she* has personal knowledge of the facts above stated and that they are true.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this *17* day of *May* 1918

Theodore Stein Clerk

Marion County Court



ABOVE: 1918 marriage application for Julius Helft, Indianapolis.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Julius Helft in US Army uniform, Indianapolis, 1918.

One of the Koenigsberg records mentioned that Bendix had moved to Koenigsberg from Ploetzkau in Anhalt, Germany around 1856. Bendix was a book printer, and probably went to Koenigsberg to be an apprentice to one of Marianne Schmidt's family members who were also printers. Research was then begun in the Ploetzkau records, including those at St. Georg Evangelical Church (where Jewish births and marriages were kept, beginning in 1828), and it was found that Bendix was born on 10 September 1835 to Levi Helft and Johanna Gottschalk.⁶ A probable father for Levi was also found — Hesekiel Helft, who died on 28 November 1836 in Ploetzkau.⁷ Further research in the *Landeshauptarchiv* [state archive] records from Dessau took this family back two more generations, to Abraham Israel [Helft], born ca. 1729 in

nearby Grosswirschleben. His father was Israel Abraham, who had been a protected Jew in Grosswirschleben for many years. Letters of protection were found in Ploetzkau for Abraham Israel in 1759 and Hesekiel in 1794. There were also house lists from 1818 and 1830 which listed the two Jewish families of Ploetzkau — the Helfts and the Meyers, with the number of occupants in each. In 1818, Hesekiel Helft lived at No. 69 with three children. He was allowed to take over the house from his father in 1794, the year in which Hesekiel had applied for protection. In 1830, Hesekiel's son Levi, master tailor, owned the house and was living there with his wife, two children, one father (Hesekiel) and an apprentice. Hesekiel's other son Gaul or Saul, master shoemaker, was renting house No. 12 and lived there with his wife and one child.⁸

In summary, it took persistence, research in many states (including Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Florida, California and New Jersey), contact with a few previously unknown family members, and extensive research in German records to finally reconnect the Helft family. New information and family links are still being discovered, in both Germany and the United States. For example, I found the WWI draft card for Julius on Ancestry.com, which also lists his father's birthplace as Koenigsberg, Germany. Another Louisville connection was also recently found through an internet contact — a Cohn family has a bible that includes a Bertha Helft, born in 1828 in Ploetzkau who married Adolph Cohn from Gardelegen, Prussia and later settled in Louisville. Bertha appears to be a daughter of Levy Helft (and a sister to Bendix). Also, I have discovered a wonderful second cousin, a granddaughter of Julius' sister, with whom I have developed a close e-mail relationship plus some sharing of family stories.

It has been exciting for me to research this lost and never discussed side of my family — to find their German origins, to learn more about the Jewish way of life in Germany, and to follow them across the Atlantic and across America as they began new lives. In the meantime, I have reconnected to a few family members, albeit only on paper, though someday I hope to meet some of the cousins. It has taken several generations after my grandmother's divorce, but finally the cousins are finding each other. My father has been pleased to discover all of this information about his father and other ancestors.



AT TOP: Walter Helft.

ABOVE: Gertrude Schwartz Helft.

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

1. Abraham Israel [Helft], 1729 — after 1794, Ploetzkau.
2. Hesekiel Abraham Helft, 1764-1836, Ploetzkau.
3. Levi Hesekiel Helft, 1796-1852, Ploetzkau.
 - i. Bertha, 1828-1878. She married Adolph Cohn. Both died in Louisville.
 4. ii. Bendix, 1835 — after 1904
4. Bendix Helft, 1835 — after 1904, Koenigsberg.
 - i. Ida, 1862-1953. She married Hyman Goldstein. Both died in Louisville.
 5. ii. Salomon Walter, 1871-1925
5. Salomon Walter Helft, 1871-1925. Born in Koenigsberg, died in New Orleans. He married 1. Gertrude Schwartz. He married 2. Maud M. Gossett.

AT LEFT: This is a brief summary showing direct descent, plus the two collateral lines in Louisville. Additional details and sources are available from the author at www.rbinforesearch.com.

ARTICLES OF VALUE FOR JEWISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE ALTPREUßISCHE GESCHLECHTERKUNDE, WITH EMPHASIS ON NAMES

PART II

BY EDWARD R. BRANDT

This report is the second in a series on the genealogical value to Jewish researchers of articles contained in the publication *Altpreußische Geschlechterkunde*. Part I appeared in *Stammbaum* 24, Winter 2004.

The article by Stefan Hartmann, “Zur Bevölkerungs und Sozialstruktur der Tilsiter Judenschaft in der ersten Hälfte des 19 Jahrhunderts” [Regarding the Demographic and Social Structure of the Jews in Tilsit in the First Half of the 19th Century], provides a wealth of vital data for the period 1813–47 for what was initially a very small Jewish community in Tilsit. The article appears in the 1990 issue of the *Altpreußische Geschlechterkunde* (APG), pp. 573–588.

The explosive rate of growth of this religious element, greatest during the period covered, led to the port of Tilsit having a higher proportion of Jews among its residents than was the case in other East Prussian cities, with the exception of Königsberg. In 1811, Tilsit had 13 Jews, compared to 25 in Memel and 14 in Gumbinnen (in the administrative district of Gumbinnen). The only other East Prussian administrative district at the time was Königsberg. The district of Allenstein was created in 1905 from the predominantly Polish-speaking (or Mazurian) southern parts of both districts [see map and associated town names on pages 40 and 41].

The Emancipation Edict of 11 March 1812 granted previously resident Jews the status of burghers and citizens in Prussia. As a result, they were required to comply with certain conditions including the use of the German language, reporting to police authorities (who later kept records of permanent residence for everyone, as they still do in Germany) and adoption of permanent surnames.

Hartmann explains that this could not truly be considered emancipation, because of its conditional nature but, more importantly, because of subsequent periodic withdrawal and grants of concessions (e.g., with respect to the role of guilds and ability to become an artisan). The *Judenreglement* [Regulation of Jews] in 1847 marked the beginning of equality with Christian burghers, although true equality, regardless of faith, was not established in the Prussian dominated North German Confederation until the Law of 3 July 1869. This law eventually applied to the large Jewish communities in non-Prussian southern Germany after unification in 1871.

The period covered by the article in the APG journal thus coincided largely with the first of two important stages in the legal transformation of Jews from, at best, tolerated or protected residents to citizens with fully equal rights. This article is of crucial genealogical significance because it covers the early period of permanent surnames for all Prussian Jews and because of rapid growth during this time.

By 1817, the East Prussian Jewish population had already grown to 2,375, nearly triple the 808 in 1811, which Hartmann attributes to the grant of the right of permanent settlement (as opposed to the right to trade) in the 1812 edict. In Tilsit, the number of Jews increased from 13 in 1811 to 265 in 1843. This latter date approximates the time when the obligation to report changes of permanent residence (or *Meldewesen*, in the residential, rather than military or commercial sense of the word) became mandatory. By 1871, the Jewish population had increased to 515.

While the years for which general population data and Jewish resident data are available do not



ABOVE: Map of cities and towns in East and West Prussia in the early 19th century.

1 Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of births listed under these names during the cited periods.

2 Ernest J. Thode, *German-English Genealogical Dictionary*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992.

coincide exactly, it is clear that the number of Jews in Tilsit increased about twenty-fold during the period when the city's total population nearly doubled. Jews accounted for 2.5% of the population of Tilsit in 1871, a higher proportion than in most other East Prussian cities.

Hartmann provides the full names of both parents (including the maiden name of the mother) for all children born in Tilsit, except for a few extramarital or posthumous births. This should make it possible in most cases to reconstruct the parentage of resident Jews, before universal adoption of surnames was mandated, by correlating birth and marriage entries.

The occupation of the father is given in almost all cases. In the early years, all were shopkeepers or traders, although often with further elaboration of specialties. A private teacher is listed for the first time in 1826. Not until 1832 are there any other occupational entries outside of the category of merchant or trader. The 1832-47 period marks the early stages of the gradual development of a somewhat more diverse occupational structure. Hartmann, incidentally, claims there was no change in the social structure of Tilsit Jews before 1847, but the data do not support such an unconditional statement.

The given names of all newborn children are recorded. Hartmann notes that this includes both "specifically Jewish" and "German" names, but emphatically denies that this is any sign of assimilation, in contrast to the vastly larger number of Jews in the much larger city of Königsberg, where assimilation did occur.

Perhaps Hartmann's distinction between "specifically Jewish" and "German" names is too rigid. Biblical names, such as Abraham, Jacob and David were common among Christians in earlier generations, not only in Germany but also in the United States. Many given names during the colonial period of 17th century Massachusetts also included those with Biblical roots. A few names, like Moses and Israel, were certainly much more common among Jews than among Christians. Of course, surname patterns varied according to time, place and denomination, so they may not have sounded German to Lutherans in northeastern East Prussia at the time.

<u>German Name</u>	<u>Polish (or Other Current) Name</u>
Allenstein	Olsztyn
Bütow	Bytów
Elbing	Elbląg
Gerdaunen	Zheleznodorozhnyy, Russia
Goldingen	Kuldīga, Latvia
Grodno	Hrodna, Belarus
Insterburg	Chernyakhovsk, Russia
Kaukehmen (Kuckerneese)	Yasnoye, Russia
Krojanke	Krajenka
Kulmsee	Chelmża
Lasdehnen (Haselberg)	Krasnoznamensk, Russia
Laugszarken	Laugsargiai, Lithuania
Memel	Klaipėda, Lithuania
Norwischeiten (may have been renamed, but not found)	
Preußisch Friedland	Debrzno
Ragnit	Neman, Russia
Soldau	Działdowo
Stallupönen (Ebenrode)	Nesterov, Russia
Tauroggen	Tauragė, Lithuania
Tilsit	Sovetsk, Russia
Tütz	Tuczno
Wirballen	Virbalis, Lithuania
Zawadda	1 & 3 Zawady
	2 Zawada
	4 no longer exists

AT RIGHT: List of town names appearing on the map of Prussia with their German and Polish spellings.

The parental surnames-maiden names of children born in 1814-23 were Marcuse-Lebegott, Marcuse-Haase (3), Friedheim-Nochem (4), Hirschfeld-Wulff, Rosenfeld-Wedel (3), Kadisch-Meyer (2), Marcuse-Leonhardt (2), Henningson-Hirsch (2), Simon-Meyer (2), Wulff (2), Widow Hirschfeld, Leonhard-Jacoby, Michaelson-Bolle (2), Marcuse-Pollnow, Loewenberg-Isaac.

For births in 1824-31, they were Leonhard-Jacoby, Callenbach-Meyer (3), Marcuse-Pollnow, Simon-Meyer (2), Glaser-Marcuse (3), Rosenfeld-Wedel (4), Loewenheim-Leonard, Loewenberg-Isaac (4), Wulff, Michelson-Bolle (2), Leonhard-Jacoby (2), Cohn-Saphir, Hanf-Pollnow, Levinson-Salomon (2), Widow Glaser, Simon-Meyer, Pollnow-Simon, Wolff-Kadisch, Lebegott-Bernstein (2), Schulz-Lewinson (2), Lebegott-Bernstein, Lebegott-Kadisch, Herrenberg-Nasse, Molduano-Abraham, Pollnow-Pollnow.¹

These statistics have not been rechecked for accuracy, nor have parental surnames been checked to see whether they always refer to the same couple nor whether there could be instances of more than one couple with the same pair of matching surnames.

Readers can check all of the vast number of birth entries under *Geburten* on pages 574-583 of the 1990 APG issue. Unless you want to identify occupations or causes of death, you do not need to know German to extract the genealogical data although it may help to know that *Ehefrau* means “wife,” *Geb(orene)* means “maiden name,” *Witwe* means “widow” and *Unverehelicht* means “unmarried.” If you do want to get all the details, I strongly recommend Ernest J. Thode’s *German-English Genealogical Dictionary*, which provides translations of a very large number of terms used in German genealogical records.³

The place from which each of the spouses came is nearly always listed after *aus* [from], a

³ To find any locality which had not ceased to exist by then and was within the boundaries of the German Empire, see *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* [1912–13, in Gothic letters], reprinted by the Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland, 2000, including an English language “Researcher’s Guide and Translations of the Introduction, Instruction for Use of the Gazetteer, and Abbreviations” by Raymond S. Wright III.

highly useful piece of information in searching records for prior ancestors, as well as for tracing migrations, which may be applicable only to a single person but may also help to establish migration patterns for groups of individuals.

Non-local bridegrooms came from the following localities (counties per *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon*, fifth edition, 1912-13)³ followed by the surname of the in-migrant:

Goldingen (Courland, i.e., southern Latvia) — Eichel
Tütz (Deutsch Krone County, West Prussia) — Marcuse
Preußisch Friedland (Schlochau County, West Prussia) — Friedheim
Krojanke (Flatow County, West Prussia) — Teppich
Zawadden (Zawadda, West Prussia) — Markowski
Bütow (Bütow County, Pomerania) — Sass
Gerdauen (Gerdauen County, East Prussia) — Wolff
Kaukehmen (Niederung County, East Prussia) — Sass
Ragnit (Ragnit County, East Prussia) — Blumenthal
Insterburg (City and Municipal County, East Prussia) — Putzrath
Taugoggen (Lithuania, but earlier an East Prussian enclave) — Wilck
Elbing (Elbing County, West Prussia) — Hirschberg
Memel (Memel County, East Prussia) — Lindenbaum
Norwischeiten (Niederung County, East Prussia) — Fischel
Soldau (Neidenburg County, East Prussia) — Rosenthal
Laugsargen (Tilsit County, East Prussia) — Jacobsthal
Stallupönen (Stallupönen County, East Prussia) — Friedmann

Thus, 17 of 38 grooms came from outside Tilsit but only eight from outside East Prussia. The six brides, including widows and foster daughters, from outside of Tilsit came from:

Wirballen (Duchy of Warsaw) — Widow Nochim
Grodno (today Hrodna, Belarus) — Hensch
Tütz (Deutsch Krone County, West Prussia) — Marcuse
Allenstein (Allenstein County, East Prussia) — Nassau
Kulmsee (Thorn County, West Prussia) — Salomon
Lasdehnen (per Hartmann: Pillkallen County, East Prussia) — Pollnow

None of the outsiders came from very large cities, like Königsberg or Danzig, which reinforces the picture of Tilsit Jews as very traditional and unassimilated, at least prior to 1850.

The 28 surnames of 47 adults who reached an age indicating that they were born before permanent surnames became mandatory follow: Abrahamowski, Börnstein, Cohn, Danziger, Friedheim, Glaser, Glückselig, Halppern, Henningson, Hirschfeld, Jacob, Kadisch, Lebegott, Leonhard, Lewinson, Lindenthal, Marcuse, Meyer, Michaelis, Michaelson, Pollnow, Rosenfeld, Rosenzweig, Salinger, Saphir, Tilsitter, Weinberger and Wulff. Thus, a majority of them were not born in Tilsit, unless one assumes that quite a few brothers who were sons of Jews resident there in 1811 took different permanent surnames.

Hartmann credits the migration to Tilsit to its blossoming trades and crafts and to the worse living conditions in most of the places from which the migrants came. He specifically mentions the southwestern West Prussian towns of Tütz and Krojanke (among the most remote places of origin) as examples. But very few arrived from neighboring Lithuania.

TOPICS AND EVENTS

COMPILED BY GEORGE ARNSTEIN

EXTENDED GEDENKBUCH. Berlin's *Bundesarchiv* plans to publish a new expanded edition of the *Gedenkbuch* of German-Jewish Holocaust Victims which should include data on Jews who lived in all of pre-war Germany. The current edition lists only citizens from the territory of the Federal Republic as constituted before reunification in 1989. Ruth Leiserowitz, historian at Humboldt University in Berlin, has been asked to complete data about East Prussia. She asks for relevant information to be sent to her at ruth@leiserowitz.de. For a look at her work concerning the former East Prussia, now part of Poland and Russia and partly available in English, see www.judeninostpreussen.de.

JEWISH MUSEUM BERLIN. An exhibition is scheduled for 2006 on the more than 400,000 German-Jews who emigrated between 1933 and 1941. "The museum seeks accounts of a few personal episodes, possibly the story of your parents," says Bettina Englmann, project director of *German-Jewish Refugees around the World*. The following information is sought: 1) Before the Flight/Emigration, 2) Life as a Refugee/Immigrant and 3) Everyday Life in the new home (until ca. 1950). The museum also seeks family photos, documents and objects which accompanied the flight (e.g., official letters, maps or ship tickets) Englmann adds, "We would like to show some of these objects as private loans in the exhibition." For further information, contact her at b.englmann@jmbberlin.de.

JEWES IN VOEHL AND MORE. County Waldeck-Frankenberg (Korbach), district: Kassel, Hessen, has a wonderful website, located at www.synagoge-voehl.de, reports Naomi Teveth. Interactive family trees are available for some families. Families presented are: Baer, Blum, Frankenthal, Kaiser, Katzenstein, Kratzenstein, Kuelsheimer, Kugelmann, Laser, Lazarus, Liebmann and Loewenstern. Clicking on a name within the tree opens up a page containing detailed information.

Another part of the website contains an alphabetical listing of Jews from other locations in this county, such as Marienhagen, Basdorf, Voehl and Oberwerber. The listing is not complete as it is a work in progress. The cemetery is another part of the site with a listing of the buried with pictures of the headstones. There is information about the synagogue, the Jewish school, houses where Jews lived, a map of locations in the county where Jews lived, many interesting articles, even links to more distant sites. The site is in German. After reaching the site, click on *Juden in Voehl*. To reach the family trees click on *Hier kommen Sie direkt zu den Stammbäumen*. To reach the alphabetical listings, click on *Hier kommen Sie direkt zum Verzeichnis*.

A REMINDER. *Aktuell*, in German, and *actuellement*, in French mean "now" or "presently," too often translated as "actually" to the confusion of Americans. On the Voehl website, for example, one of the links reads *Aktuelles* which, sure enough, leads to the most current news, then, in descending order, older events.

LISTS OF POSEN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES. Now at the Leo Baeck Institute, in the Edward Luft Collection [<http://lbi.cjh.org/mclbiinternetsqs.htm>; insert *Edward Luft Collection* into the title block] are about 600 pages, or roughly 18,000 names, of Posen high school graduates, both Jews and Christians. This is the only place to see so many of these lists of graduates in one place, gathered from many publications all over Germany. However, many of these lists, organized by high school within a given town, are also online at www.polishroots.org, with more being added. Both of these resources have many other items of Posen Jewish interest.

The lists of high school graduates cover the period from about 1820 to 1915. In many cases, the original vital records no longer exist. Usually the information consists of the date of the document, the school involved, the term and year of graduation, the number of the graduate in chronological order, the name of the graduate, his or her birth date and birth place, the father's location and profession and whether deceased, and the graduate's current profession or further study. Those students deceased by the date of the compilation of the record are usually indicated as

are those excused from oral examinations by reason of outstanding performance as a student. In some cases involving girls (but not boys), the father's name and town of residence appear for certain schools. Only rarely can you discern the name of the boy's father, such as when he is shown on a separate list as having made a donation to the school. In a few cases, there is an indication of those who left school prior to graduation, or lists of students at the high school who are still in attendance. Often, the Jewish and other teachers are also identified, including religious affiliation. The personal data for all schools in Prussia were subject to uniform requirements although the exact information required often changed slightly over time.

For Germany, the same information is available for other high schools and for areas formerly in that country prior to WWI, as well as for many other locations, such as Scotland. These collections await photocopying by some interested person. In all cases, the information is now in the public domain.

Luft [edwardluft@hotmail.com] is willing to offer advice to those seriously interested in copying some of the records for given schools or geographical areas other than Posen on condition that the photocopies will be donated to LBI or another appropriate archive in the USA.

GERSIG ON THE WEB. During 2004, GerSIG — German Special Interest Group, part of JewishGen.org — has expanded its coverage on its website, www.jewishgen.org/gersig, especially regarding the listing of references to books, book chapters and websites about German-Jewish communities. There are 360 communities listed, which include 500 individual items and 262 links to specific websites.

Webmaster Arthur Obermayer invites new material that could be of specific interest to GerSIG participants and requests that information appropriate for inclusion be sent to him at obermayer@alum.mit.edu. He writes: "we have the most extensive collection of German historical maps and links to such maps that I am aware of, but there are probably other sources of maps to which we should link, or individuals may have historical German maps of broad interest (not specific towns or regions) that either they could scan or we could scan and include on our website." The principal requirement for suggested additions is that

material be of general interest to German-Jewish genealogical pursuits.

GERMAN SCRIPT. For those looking to decipher the German script known as *Suetterlin*, Margarete Ritzkowsky in Tutzing, Bavaria has a website [www.suetterlin-service.de] which explains in German, English and French her services including ranges in price. Other providers of such service may be accessed through www.jewishgen.org/gersig, by selecting *Resources*, then *Translations*.

KREFELD CEMETERY. The Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute for German-Jewish History in Duisburg, Germany, has published a book documenting the old Jewish cemetery of Krefeld, Lower Rhine area [today North Rhine-Westphalia]: *Steine wie Seelen. Der alte jüdische Friedhof Krefeld. Grabmale und Inschriften*, by Michael Brocke and Aubrey Pomerance. In two volumes: *Texts and Photographs*. Available at Stadtarchiv Krefeld. Tel: 49-(0)2151-862701. Fax: 49-(0)2151-862710. www.archive.nrw.de/home.asp?stadta-krefeld.

Nathanja Hüttenmeister, who is the author of the reliable, analogous book on the Laupheim cemetery, reports that the first volume covers the history of the cemetery, introductions to the art and symbols of the tombstones, analysis of the contents and the development of the Hebrew inscriptions of almost 550 Krefeld tombstones from 1770 to 1929. They are printed in their entirety, with German translations, commentaries, short biographies and indices.

YAD VASHEM DATABASE. On 22 November 2004, Yad Vashem released the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, which can be accessed on its website. This database of approximately 3 million entries includes every page of testimony submitted to Yad Vashem, as well as names culled from historical documentation and local commemorative projects. A number of search types are available, driven by a rich number of parameters. www.yadvashem.org.

HOLD THE DATE. The 25th Conference of the International Association of Jewish Genealogy Societies will take place at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, 10-15 July 2005. Keep abreast of events at www.jgssn.org.

BOOK REVIEWS

Genealogical Guide to East and West Prussia: Records, Sources, Publications & Events, revised edition by Edward R. Brandt, Ph.D. and Adalbert Goertz, Ph.D. Brandt, 2003. 478 pages.

The authors of this voluminous research guide are well known authorities in the field of German genealogy, with a great knowledge of Mennonite sources. Brandt is co-author of *Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns*, and several other books. Adalbert Goertz, a native of Kreis Rosenberg, West Prussia, is a tireless researcher into the many sources for Mennonite and Evangelical family history in East and West Prussia.

Virtually the entire volume was written by Dr. Brandt, employing a chatty style that chronicles his explorations of the many aspects of genealogical sources in the former Prussia — sources both general and arcane. One of his particular strengths is in discovering inconsistencies in published data and public conceptions. For example, he points out that in one of the archival documents Protestant records for Łódź are listed under Litzmannstadt, but Jewish and Catholic records are listed under Łódź. In the same vein, he notes that researchers of Prussian records now housed in Polish archives can send communications in English to the Head Office of the State Archives in Warsaw. Neither of these tips is startling or profound, but both are useful bits of information.

The book is divided into thirteen parts and contains several dozen maps. Part I lists worldwide sources of genealogical information, including inventories, catalogs and similar publications. Part II lists metricals (Parish and Jewish vital statistics) and civil registers. Part III covers land tax, court and migration records. Part IV provides data from lineage books, card collections and indexes. In Part V, the authors discuss religious and non-Germanic natives or settlers, followed by a discussion in Part VI of other useful records and

publications including military records and victims of the Holocaust. Part VII is entitled “Historical, Cartographic & Surname Resources” and includes both historical and contemporary gazetteers and information on Jewish surnames, as well as an addendum on the Marienwerder District map collection (3,565 maps) housed in the Prussian State Privy Archives, among which are many village maps.

In Part VIII of the book, the authors devote eight pages to regional names, boundaries and genealogical regions including a useful introduction to changing boundaries, names and jurisdictions since 1815. Part IX is entitled “Dates of Events Relevant for Ancestral Research.” This 36-page section may be the most interesting part of the book as it provides a dateline of historic events from the period 992-2000. Part X covers frequently asked questions about East and West Prussia, with answers provided by Goertz. Even veteran researchers will benefit from the information given by Goertz on the pronunciation of place names, land measurements, civil registers and basics on the existence of the Prussian state.

Part XI contains eighteen appendices covering such diverse topics as articles about East and West Prussia, emigration from West Prussia, and former German and current Polish, Lithuanian or Russian place names. Part XII provides 25 maps for various historic periods starting with Preussenland in 1230. Part XIII is headed “Personal Name, Place Name and Ethnic and Religious Group Index.”

While this is clearly not a book whose main focus is German-Jewish research, it does contain much of value to genealogists of this orientation. Its listings of resources, historical maps showing border changes, the historic timelines and many other tips make this a valuable addition to the serious student of German-Jewish genealogy. We hope any future edition will contain references to *Stammbaum* in addition to the authors’ existing mention of *Avotaynu* and Miriam Weiner’s *Jewish Roots in Poland: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*. In addition, we suggest the many German-language definitions throughout the book could be usefully aggregated in a glossary. But these are minor quibbles with what clearly is a genealogical tour de force.

The book lists at \$47.95 plus postage and handling (\$40.00 plus \$4.00 S/H for libraries) and

is available from Edward R. Brandt, 241 Arthur Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414-3601. The e-mail address is brandtfam@prodigy.net and the website is www.tc.umn.edu/~brand050. Purchasers of the earlier edition are entitled to a substantial discount on the current edition.

— CLAUD W. HIRSCH

American Judaism: A History, by Jonathan D. Sarna. Yale University Press, 2004. 490 pages.

American Judaism was published last spring, just in time to launch the one-year celebration of the 350th year of Jewish presence in America. The book chronicles this experience from its colonial beginnings to the present day in 374 pages of text, plus over 100 pages of notes, bibliography, glossary, time line and index.

What relevance does this work have for readers of *Stammbaum*? Perhaps my own interest in reading this book can provide an answer. I was looking for the author's interpretation of the influence of German-Jewish culture and immigration on the evolution of the American Jewish scene, and was amply rewarded.

In the beginning, it was primarily the Sephardim who settled in what became the United States of America. This community of Jews was recognized as the "Hebrew Nation" or "Jewish Nation," built around a local synagogue (that is, one synagogue per community). At that time, rabbinical leadership was absent; the kehillah was run by a lay leadership. While there were early struggles to be accepted by the Protestant majority, eventually these Jews participated in the economic and political life, especially active in trade with off-shore partners.

But numbers really tell the story. By 1820, there were approximately 3,000 Jews in America, making for roughly .03% of the total population. By 1880, this number jumped to almost 300,000 or almost .6% of the total population — up by a factor of one hundred in headcount and an increase by a factor of 20% of the population. This enormous swell in a 60-year period was due to the influx of the Ashkenazic immigration, primarily Jews from the German-speaking areas of Europe (specifically cited by the author as being from Bavaria, Eastern

Prussia and Posen, with a sprinkling of Jews from Alsace who emigrated to the American South).

That was the time when the synagogue community began to break down and transform to a community of synagogues. The new immigration brought other *minhagim* [rites] and viewpoints with respect to religion and its expression, creating communal organizations separate from the synagogue. A stream of rabbis, *shochets* and teachers began to arrive to provide for the needs of the community. Among this group were such luminaries as David Einhorn, James Gutheim, Isaac Leiser, Max Lilienthal, Leo Merzbacher, Abraham (Reiss) Rice, Morris Raphall and Isaac Mayer Wise.

German-Jewish customs, as well as sermons delivered in German, came along with these leaders. The liberalization of religious practice in Germany was also brought to the American shores by some of these clergy. It was, for example, Rabbi Wise who introduced new ritual and observance which came to be known as Minhag Amerika. This became the start of what ultimately became the growth and entrenchment of the Reform movement in the United States, initially appealing primarily to German speaking Jews.

The divisions that were occurring in synagogue and ritual practice also extended to communal structures that served the Jews originating in German speaking lands and their Eastern European brothers, leading to a duality of organizations in areas of fraternal clubs, hospitals, cemeteries, et al.

All of these topics are duly related in a very readable format. The book is a remarkable encapsulation of a rich history and contains many interesting details of events regarding the growth of American Jewry to this day.

— WERNER L. FRANK

Der jüdische Friedhof Harburg, by Eberhard Kändler and Gil Hüttenmeister. Christians Verlag, 2004. 311 pages.

Harburg, a Jewish community that peaked in 1925 with 358 members, is dwarfed by Hamburg-Altona, its neighbor across the Elbe River. The book, *Der jüdische Friedhof Harburg*, briefly sketches Harburg's Jewish community history before focusing on the cemetery itself. Burials in

the cemetery took place from the late 18th century until the mid-1930s. The surviving 244 stones have been beautifully photographed. Hebrew inscriptions, when present, have been translated into German. In addition, a brief biography is included, which provides information about the individual, family linkages, profession, etc. The book is well indexed by family name and birth and death dates, making it easy to search for family members.

— PETER LANDÉ

Escape to Manila: From Nazi Tyranny to Japanese Terror, by Frank Ephraim. University of Illinois Press, 2003. 220 pages.

Author Frank Ephraim describes a little known aspect of Jewish efforts to escape from Nazi Germany and Austria by seeking a haven in the Philippines. Ephraim was such a refugee who fled Berlin. He tells the story of these refugees who managed to get to the Philippines with the ultimate hope of many to reach the United States. That quest had to be delayed because of WWII, during which time refugees endured the Japanese occupation and the devastating battle to liberate Manila in 1945. Much less well known than the Jews who sought refuge in Shanghai, and an exile population a tenth of its size, the story of these refugees is well worth reading.

Luckily, for the refugees, the Japanese decided that Jews who had no official country designation would be treated as “third-party aliens” and registered as “stateless Jews.” A rabbi was named as the official representative of the community. Jews were even allowed to hold religious services and maintain a school. Still, economic conditions were extremely difficult and became worse as American troops reached the Philippines in 1944, and ultimately Manila in 1945. A number of Jews were killed during the battle to free Manila.

During the course of his research, Ephraim compiled a list of those Jews who reached the Philippines, and a few who received visas but never arrived. These 1,319 names — along with years of arrival, places from which they fled (where available) and fates — are not listed in the book itself but appear on JewishGen.org’s Holocaust

database [www.jewishgen.org/databases/holocaust]. Inquiries regarding this general subject as well as information about specific individuals should be sent directly to the author at fephraim@erols.com.

— PETER LANDÉ

The Eschenheimer and Nachmann Families: Biographies and Genealogical Charts, by Abraham Frank and Gerhard Buck. Privately published by A. Frank, 2003. 167 pages.

An important cooperative effort between an Israeli — Abraham Frank of Jerusalem — and a German — Gerhard Buck, a former high school teacher and historian of Idstein (Hesse), Germany — has led to the publication of this joint research into the lives of the Jews in the area of Limburg (Lahn), Diez, Camberg and Wiesbaden. This book deals with the history and genealogy of two large Jewish families that lived for at least three centuries, up until the time of the Holocaust, in Esch and Nordenstadt and various other localities.

The descendants of these families forced to leave their former homes during the Nazi era, and who are now living in the USA, Israel and various European countries, know very little of the lives and achievements of their ancestors, the country Jews of the former German province of Hesse-Nassau. The authors aimed to portray an authentic overview of these persons and their communities by delving into archives and illustrating their lives by way of old documents, letters, photos, biographies and genealogical charts.

Abraham Frank has been in search of documents and traces of the life of the Jews in the area of his birth in Hesse for decades and has contributed many articles on the history of the Nassau Jews, including 70 monographs of related communities for the *Pinkas Kehilot Hessen*, published by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Authority in Jerusalem. He is the author of the impressive introduction to the book under review here, including the 12 genealogical charts and the biographies. He has also included for publication herein numerous old photos, letters and official documents from his family archives.

Gerhard Buck contributed the monographs of the former Jewish communities of Esch (near Idstein) and Nordenstadt-Wallau (near Wiesbaden), the location

where the Eschenheimer and Nachmann families had resided for at least three centuries.

Frank and Buck consciously compiled their work in English since most of the descendants of these families no longer have command of the German language. This work is of great historical importance, containing information that is of interest far beyond the immediate circle of family members.

— EUGEN CASPARY

Biographisches Gedenkbuch der Münchner Juden, 1933-1945, Band I (A-L), edited by Andreas Heusler, Brigitte Schmidt, Eva Ohlen, Tobias Weger, Simone Dicke. Stadtarchiv München, 2003. 871 pages.

As the title indicates, this is a memorial book for the more than 4,500 Jewish residents of Munich who are known to have been both deported and murdered, or who died in Munich between 1933 and 1945 (Munich's pre-war Jewish population was in excess of 12,000). This book is similar in format to memorial books from other German cities in that it gives names, date and place of birth, local address and fate of the individual. However, in addition to this information this book also lists parents' names, spouse, children, profession and date of arrival in Munich. In many cases a photograph of the person is included.

Volume II will complete the alphabet, while the Stadtarchiv hopes to compile a future volume to include all persons who fled/emigrated — about 8,000 persons. Unfortunately, as a result of *Datenschutz* [German privacy laws] only those persons born more than 90 years before the publication of a book, or those where information on a younger person has appeared elsewhere, e.g. in another book or on the official websites of the Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem or JewishGen.org, can be included.

The following example illustrates the wealth of information contained in a typical listing:

Karl Deutsch, Dekorationsmaler (interior decorator/painter); Born 3/3/1891 in Metz; Moved to Munich 5/8/1922 where he resided and ran his business; Sent to Dachau from 10/11/1938 to 8/12/1938; Sent to Sachsenhausen where he died 24/1/40; Parents: Benjamin Deutsch and Regina nee Schnurmann; Married 27/1/1923 to Leopoldine Birzle, born 18/9/1896 in Munich (not Jewish);

Children (not named in book) born 6/8/1922 and 15/9/1923.

The problems of *Datenschutz* can be illustrated by the fact that in the 1939 census, readily available everywhere except in Germany and Israel, Leopoldine is listed with the maiden name Bizer (not Birzle) and the children's names are given as Leopoldine and Karl Theodor.

This first volume is the product of years of work, but was worth waiting for. It can only be hoped that Volume II will appear soon, to complete the tragic but fascinating story of the fate of Munich's Jews.

— PETER LANDÉ

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