

# Museum of the History of Jews in the Ostalb Region in the former synagogue in Bopfingen-Oberdorf



Felix Sutschek - Bernhard Hildebrand

Catalog

## Imprint

Museum of the History of Jews in the Ostalb Region  
in the former synagogue in Bopfingen-Oberdorf

## Catalog

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When we founded the Support Association for the former synagogue in Oberdorf in 1989, our first major task was to purchase the building, at the time used as a store for tools and equipment, and then to refurbish the synagogue as a memorial and meeting place. With substantial assistance from the Ostalb District Council, the State of Baden-Württemberg, Bopfingen Town Council, and generous donations from our members and friends, we were able to restore the synagogue, built by the Jewish community in 1744, to its former dignity and to some extent to its original beauty.

The Memorial and Meeting Place in the former synagogue was opened in November 1993. Since then many thousands of people have visited the former synagogue, among them many young people and numerous relatives of Jews who once lived in Oberdorf from the USA, Israel and Great Britain.

In his memorable speech on the 40th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Richard von Weizsäcker made the following statement: “It is not a matter of coming to terms with the past, that is in no way possible, it cannot be changed in retrospect or undone. But anyone who closes their eyes to the past will end up blind to the present. Those who cannot face remembering inhumanity will be susceptible to new risks of infection. The Jewish people remember and will always remember. As human beings we seek reconciliation. And for precisely this reason we must understand that there can be no reconciliation without remembrance.”

Von Weizsäcker’s statement provided both the motivation and guiding principle for our Support Association when designing and furnishing the Museum of the History of Jews in the Ostalb Region in the former synagogue in Oberdorf. The Museum was opened in the autumn of 1997. However, apart from tours conducted by knowledgeable guides, we were only able to offer the many interested visitors to the museum leaflets giving brief information about the Synagogue, the Support Association, and the Museum. The comprehensive museum catalog that we envisaged at that time had to be postponed, because the association was entirely dependent on donations and membership subscriptions and there was simply not enough money available.

Thanks to generous donations, among others from the Ellwangen Rotary Club and the Lions Club Ostalb-Ipf and Aalen, we are delighted that we are now able to realize our long-term project of a “Museum Catalog”.

Years ago Felix Sutschek M.A. and Dr. Bernhard Hildebrand established and developed the Museum of the History of Jews in the Ostalb Region in the former synagogue in Oberdorf, on the basis of very careful research into local Jewish history. Through their commitment and numerous activities, they have long been closely associated with our Support Association. Now they are also the competent authors of our museum catalog.

Our relatively small museum has a great deal to offer, which many visitors over the years have experienced as interesting, inspiring and moving. The new museum catalog can now be used to advantage to prepare, accompany and review visits to the museum.

Regarding the contents of the museum, I should like to draw attention to a few especially important areas:

### **Peaceful coexistence of Jews and Christians in East Württemberg prior to the Nazi tyranny**

The presentation of the history of Jews in our area shows that Christians and Jews in Oberdorf as well as other nearby towns and villages with Jewish populations, with few isolated exceptions, lived and worked peacefully together over many generations.

From the enactment of equal rights in the mid-nineteenth century, there were Jews in many professions including judges, prosecutors, attorneys, doctors, members of parliament and town councilors. As full German citizens Jews played their part in the successful development of East Württemberg.

### **The Museum in Oberdorf is a museum for the whole Ostalb Region**

With individual displays concerning the history of the Jewish communities in Ellwangen, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Lauchheim and Pflaumloch, the Oberdorf Museum reaches out far beyond just the presentation of the immediate local history.

### **Moving memorials to victims of the Nazi regime**

Panels in the museum record the names of the men, women and children who were deported from Oberdorf to concentration camps in Riga, Izbica, Auschwitz and Theresienstadt in the years 1941/42, and murdered there.



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For their relatives, and for those of us who remember them and do not want to forget, it is important that all those who have no final resting place now have, in the list of their first and family names, their date of birth, and as far as is known the date and place of their death, a place of honor for all time in the Memorial and Meeting Place in the former synagogue in Oberdorf.

**Heimann Torah scroll returned to its place of origin**

The objects in the museum that stem from the old Oberdorf synagogue have great spiritual value. They were rescued from destruction on 11 November 1938 by the courageous actions of both Jews and Christians alike, when the interior was ransacked by SA thugs from outside the town.

Of the 17 Torah scrolls in the old synagogue, the Heimann Torah is the only one known to have survived. Karl Heiman donated this Torah scroll to us. It accompanied his family when they fled Germany in 1939. Thus in our museum it takes pride of place as a link between the old Jewish place of worship and our Memorial and Meeting Place in the refurbished former synagogue.

I should like to thank Felix Sutschek M.A., Cultural Affairs' Officer, and Dr. Bernhard Hildebrand, District Archivist, for this very interesting and attractive Museum Catalog; my thanks also to Konrad Theiss and the Ellwangen Rotary Club for taking the initiative and financially supporting this successful project, to the Lions Club Ostalb-Ipf and Aalen, and to Torsten Gaiser of Gaiser Offsetdruck for their

donations. We hope that the new Museum Catalog will be equally well received by our members, friends and the many visitors to the museum. The catalog seeks to inform as well as to encourage reflection on the causes and effects of anti-Semitism, and to strengthen the efforts of many people to engage personally in the fight against all forms of anti-Semitism.

**Dr. Diethelm Winter**  
Retired Head of the District Administration  
Chairman of the Support Association



1. Display cabinet in the museum



2. Display cabinet showing Jewish history



3. View of the interior



4. Torah scroll and religious artifacts

**History of the Jews in the Ostalb Region**

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5. Former synagogue in Bopfingen-Oberdorf

## First Jewish settlements in the Middle Ages

Jews have been living in the German area longer than in any other part of Europe with the exception of Italy. Jews were first mentioned in Germany in a letter from Emperor Constantine to the then Roman town of Cologne in 321 A.D. This letter decreed that Jews could be admitted to the curia and the town regiment. This is the oldest document recording the existence of a Jewish community in Germany.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that at the time there were also Jewish communities in the other towns founded by the Romans along the Rhine, Mosel and Danube.

Between the 5th and 7th centuries many sources attest to Jews living in the territories of the Franconian kings as entrepreneurs, merchants, land owners, customs officials, doctors and masters of the mint.<sup>2</sup>

Charlemagne (768 – 814) offered protection to the Jews so they could pursue their religious, cultural and economic affairs. They were allowed to acquire property and bear weapons. In return for this protection, Jews had to pay a tenth of their annual trading profits to the king. The king could also give away or pledge this revenue. From the beginning of the Carolingian era to the extermination of German Jewry in the 20th century, Jews have always lived in Germany.<sup>3</sup> The development of the Jewish language, Yiddish, probably dates from the beginning of the 9th century along the Rhine. This hybrid language is composed of Germanic, Latin and Hebrew elements. Later on, when some Jews migrated to Eastern Europe, elements of various other East European languages were assimilated into it.

## Situation of the Jews from the 11th to 16th centuries

In many newly founded towns in the 11th and 12th centuries Jews were welcome. Above all merchants' families were readily admitted because they offered the promise of links to external trade. However doctors and pharmacists were also welcomed.

A difficult time for the Jews began with the start of the Crusades. In 1096, at the time of the first Crusade, many Jews were murdered by fanatical crusaders because they refused to be baptized.<sup>4</sup>

Fundamental changes to the lives of the Jews stemmed from the 4th Lateran Council in 1215 under Pope Innocent III. Resolutions were passed that aimed to isolate and humiliate the Jews. As a result Jews were required to wear a mark of identification on their clothes when they were in public, to indicate that they were Jewish, such as a yellow spot or later the pointed Jewish hat. They were also excluded from becoming guild members, and were forbidden to farm. Thus, besides trade, they were only allowed to pursue occupations forbidden to Christians by church law, such as moneylending and pawnbroking.<sup>5</sup>

In 1236 the Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II granted the Jews in his realm a concession. The newly established legal system aimed to end the legal uncertainty in which Jews then lived. Due to their increased need of protection, they were assigned to the Emperor's "chamber" as servants, thereby becoming the direct property of the emperor. This exceptional status as "chamber servants" to the emperor

or was accompanied, of course, by the personal obligation to pay the emperor a sum of money for this protection. When money was short these revenues from the Jews' seignorage could be ceded by the emperor to towns or local rulers. Thus the Jews were tolerated because they constituted an economic benefit to the owner of their seignorage. They literally became "mobile commodities".<sup>6</sup>

In 1342 the Wittelsbach Emperor Ludwig the Bavarian (1314 – 1347) introduced a new tax on Jews which subsequently became known as the "golden sacrificial penny". The emperor decreed that "each Jew... who is 12 years old and worth 20 gulden, any and all shall give one gulden every year as interest on their person".<sup>7</sup>

In our region Jews are mentioned for the first time in 1241 in Bopfingen and Schwäbisch Gmünd. The imperial tax register for that year shows that the Jews in Gmünd paid a tax of 12 silver marks while the Jews in Bopfingen and Donauwörth together paid 2 silver marks.<sup>8</sup> From this one can conclude that the Jewish community of Bopfingen was evidently much smaller than that of Gmünd. Nothing else is known about the Jewish community in Bopfingen at the time. However we can infer that the community had a prayer room and was probably allowed to use the facilities of the Jewish community in Nördlingen.

Soon after settling here the Jews were to be subjected to horrific events. Due to the alleged "defilement of the sacrament" by Jews in Röttingen in 1298, the nobleman Rintfleisch felt called by God to annihilate Jewish communities with his marauding troops, first in Franconia and later in Swabia.<sup>9</sup> In Ellwangen the "Jew

killers” beat to death the scholar Uri, son of Rabbi Jakob, his five sons, his sister and three other Jews.

In 1348/49 the Black Death raged across wide swathes of Europe. This was a hitherto unknown plague, and the population was totally at its mercy. However the term Black Death is also used to describe the persecution of Jews, which accompanied this pestilence. The Jews were accused of having poisoned the wells thus bringing about the plague. In remembrance of the many Jews killed, their names were inscribed in so-called Jewish “memorial books”. They also record the names of the places where the Jews were murdered, which in the Ostalb region were Bopfingen, Ellwangen and Schwäbisch Gmünd. Undoubtedly the death of the Jews would not have been inopportune for some. Many craftsmen, farmers, towns, monasteries and even noblemen had debts to the Jews, which were now wiped out.<sup>10</sup>

While nothing is known of any Jews living in Bopfingen in the following years, a Jew called Mosse from Bopfingen and his brother-in-law are mentioned in Nördlingen in 1357, and a Jew called Seckelmann from Bopfingen in Tauberbischofsheim in 1378. From time to time during the period from 1385 to 1499, Jews are mentioned who paid the Jewish tax in Bopfingen.<sup>11</sup>

In a register of duties paid on property in Ellwangen, Jews are also mentioned as taxpayers during the period 1381 to 1420. In 1428 and 1443 Jews from Ellwangen were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Nördlingen. In 1445 Abbot Johannes admitted the Jew Koppelmann from Wemding and his family to Ellwangen for a protection fee of 12 gulden.<sup>12</sup>

Bopfingen and Schwäbisch Gmünd also started to admit Jews again. Do these sources contain any details about the everyday life of the Jews? Although the documents are mainly about legal transactions between Jews and Christians we will try to see if they also shed light on any other aspects of Jewish life.

On 9 November 1480 the town of Schwäbisch Gmünd took the Jew Simon from Tannhausen under its protection for five years. In return Simon agreed to pay the annual town taxes. The letter of protection states that at that time the town would not permit any other Jews involved in moneylending to settle there. Thus Simon had a privileged position in Gmünd. He was also allowed to take on other Jews but had to pay tax for them. Furthermore he was permitted to employ a cantor for his family and servants.

The interest rates were also regulated by the letter of protection. While the interest rates for local people were kept low, there were no binding rates for outsiders. He was forbidden, however, to conduct his business before the “early mass” or in the evening after the “watch bells”. Furthermore he was not allowed to lend money with a citizen’s weapons as security. David, Simon’s son, was permitted to settle in Schwäbisch Gmünd on 3 January 1486; he was even allowed to buy a house there.<sup>13</sup>

A contract between the town of Bopfingen and a Jew has also been preserved. In 1499 the Jew Heynn had been accepted as a citizen, with his family, for three years with the same rights as the other citizens of Bopfingen. The town agreed to protect his property, for which he naturally had to pay taxes to the town. His an-

nual tax was 6 gulden, which he had to pay by Michaelmas. His activities were governed in the contract as follows: he was to receive 3.4 % interest for loans but was not allowed to lend on chalices, chasubles, books, wet skins, unprinted cloth, wool or citizens’ arms. On celebration days he was not to be compelled to go to court or make business transactions. Butchers were required to sell him the requested “kosher” meat. He was also permitted to use the bath house, however only with advance notice and after the Christians had taken their baths.<sup>14</sup>

#### **The expulsion of Jews from towns. From the outset of rural Jewry to the start of the Thirty Years’ War.**

From the second half of the 15th century onwards the social and economic situation of Jews in towns became more and more difficult. Many people got into economic difficulties due to their debts to Jews. And following the Basel Council of 1534, the clergy also warned against Jewish usury, which was prohibited by the Church.

Because of the newly founded Christian trading houses, people were no longer dependent on the Jews who were increasingly seen as irksome competition. As a remedial measure, people tried to get rid of them. It was possible to expel them with the permission of the emperor who, on payment of a large sum of money, was prepared to waive the protection of his “chamber servants”. He passed laws granting imperial towns the right to expel their Jews. In his will of 1496, Count Eberhard V of Württemberg also decreed that no Jews be allowed to live or trade in Württemberg.<sup>15</sup>

Many other towns also expelled their Jews. In Schwäbisch Gmünd in 1498, Emperor Maximilian I settled a dispute between the town and its Jews. The emperor decreed that the Jews under the protection of the town must pay taxes. However, as to their profession as moneylenders, it was further stipulated that they were not allowed to lend money to the citizens of Gmünd. It was also forbidden to lend money against real estate and Church property. Such financial restrictions made life almost impossible for the Jews.<sup>16</sup> Despite this, the town went a step further and on 24 February 1501, against payment of a large sum of money, Emperor Maximilian I issued an order from Nuremberg permitting the expulsion of Jews from the town and its territory and stating that there was no obligation to accept any Jews in the next ten years. All the privileges which the Jews had hitherto enjoyed were annulled.<sup>17</sup> Finally in 1521 Emperor Charles V decreed that no Jews could settle in the territories of Schwäbisch Gmünd nor trade there. This ban remained in force until the 19th century.<sup>18</sup>

The imperial town of Nördlingen paid 1000 gulden for the “right” to expel its Jews, an enormous amount of money at the time. In return Emperor Maximilian granted Nördlingen an expulsion order. Of the money paid, the emperor received 800 gulden while the remaining 200 gulden went to Nikolaus Zigler who had brokered the deal. The Jews had to leave the town in the spring of 1507. They found refuge in the surrounding villages in the lands of the Counts of Oettingen.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Rural Jewry**

Rural Jewry in Swabia developed after the expulsion of the Jews from the major towns and cities, and their settlement under protection in our case in the lands of the Counts of Oettingen.

Emperor Ludwig IV of Bavaria already permitted the Counts of Oettingen to take in Jews and tax them. In the charter signed in Nuremberg on 30 May 1331, it states that all Jews already settled on the Count’s lands, who travel to him or settle there should do so for “their own benefit with all rights, privileges and good practices”.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, for the first time, the emperor transferred to the Counts of Oettingen the right to all taxes on the Jews resident in the county as imperial chamber servants, to which he was legally entitled. In 1333 Emperor Ludwig IV renewed this privilege.<sup>21</sup>

On 16 October 1347, King Charles IV ceded to Count Albrecht of Oettingen, in recognition of his services, all rights over the Jews employed at his castles.<sup>22</sup> In December of the same year, King Charles IV gave permission to the brothers Ludwig VIII and Friedrich II, Counts of Oettingen, until revocation, to admit Jews to their towns, markets, festivals and villages with all services and “usages” ensuing therefrom.<sup>23</sup>

We may assume that, as time went on and their rule expanded, the Counts of Oettingen became permanently entitled to take in Jews and tax them. This also implies that a new protection of Jews came into being. The old kind of

protection under which Jews were classed as “chamber servants”, which was a royal prerogative, was now replaced by a right of economic significance. Thus it is possible that, even before the expulsion of Jews from the towns, some Jews had already settled in Pflaumloch and Wallerstein under the protection of the Counts of Oettingen.

Let us now return to the eviction of Jews from Nördlingen. We can assume that some of the Jews who were expelled from Nördlingen in 1507 may also have settled in Oberdorf in the lands of the Counts of Oettingen. In the Jewish expulsion order, the Nördlingen town council had failed to stipulate that Jews were not allowed to settle within a radius of two leagues (about 15 km) from Nördlingen and there was no binding agreement with the Counts of Oettingen; nor was there any understanding regarding the possible settlement of Jews on their territory.

There is no firm proof that any Jews lived in Oberdorf prior to 1507. However it is known that in 1514 there were “two new Jewish settlements in Flochberg and Oberdorf”.<sup>24</sup> In 1578 the “Jewish alley” in Oberdorf is mentioned for the first time.<sup>25</sup> The names of the first Jews on Oettingen lands in Oberdorf are mentioned 1587 in the registers of the Nördlingen Pentecostal mass. Up to the year 1600, 23 Jews from Oberdorf are recorded as having attended the fair in Nördlingen during the period.<sup>26</sup> For the same time, 25 Jews from Aufhausen and 46 Jews from Pflaumloch are also recorded in the register as having attended the fair in Nördlingen.<sup>27</sup>

A privilege granted to the town of Bopfingen by Emperor Charles V on 11 June 1545 was to have disastrous consequences for the economic situation of the Jews. From that time onward, Jews were only allowed to lend money to local citizens with the permission of the mayor and the town council. This was clearly designed to exclude Jews from the money-lending business. Citizens who nonetheless had financial dealings with Jews were liable to punishment through “imprisonment in the tower” or expulsion from the town. Bopfingen itself now took on the role of moneylender and in 1578 the old privilege granted by Charles V was renewed by Emperor Rudolf II. Up to the Thirty Year’s War the town continued to lend money at an interest rate of 5 %.

In spite of Jews and Christians living close together, a lot of prejudice and mistrust existed in rural communities. When the child of a couple from Nähermemmingen disappeared in September 1555, three Jews from Dorfmerkingen were accused of a ritual murder but were eventually acquitted.<sup>28</sup>

Another case shows that contact with Jews or their integration was frowned on. It has been passed down that in 1594 a certain Thomas Scharf wanted to teach German to Jewish children in Neresheim. When this came to the ears of the local magistrate, he was put in prison. In the end, Count Wilhelm gave orders for the man to be released, but only after he had been shown the errors of his ways.<sup>29</sup>

### From the Thirty Years’ War to the end of the 18th century

The Thirty Years’ War was as hard for the Jews as for the rest of the population. Everyone suffered from hunger, billeting of soldiers, plundering and extortion payments. Some Jews left their rural communities and sought protection in the fortified towns or cities. This explains why Jews are mentioned in Oberdorf, Aufhausen and Pflaumloch up to the start of the war in 1618 but not thereafter.

Shortly before the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1646, six Jewish families (four from Nördlingen and one each from Baldern and Neresheim) were given free passage and the right to reside in Ellwangen, as well as the same freedom to carry on their business as the Christians. Evidently the activities of these Jews were advantageous to the town, which had been badly damaged in the war.<sup>30</sup>

A small Jewish community is mentioned as living in Baldern after the war. It consisted of six families who besides building a synagogue also had a cemetery. When in 1658 the Jews from Baldern, together with those of Neresheim, Aufhausen and Oberdorf, asked the Count’s widow, Isabella Eleonora, for their protection to be extended, the renewal was granted but with tougher conditions. The Jews were ordered to either leave the county by the end of the year or move to the devastated Härtsfeld and rebuild the village of Elchingen. This was unacceptable to the Jews, which resulted in their temporary expulsion from the county.<sup>31</sup>

Under pressure from the citizens of Neresheim, on 1 October 1658 the Jews were driven out of

the town for good. The reason given was that the Jewish population had reached 80 people and the Jewish and Christian children could no longer be kept apart. Before leaving the town they had to sell their houses and other property. They were then made to pay 10 percent of the proceeds as a supplementary tax. This was the end of the continuous Jewish settlement in Neresheim.<sup>32</sup>

In 1658 the commander of the Order of Teutonic Knights, Philipp von Gravenegg from Lauchheim, issued a letter of protection for six Jewish families covering a period of six years, despite severe misgivings on the part of the parish priest, Mr. Mühlich. The Jews carried on a lively trade in livestock and goods in the surrounding area. In 1678 seven Jewish families were living in Lauchheim with their numbers increasing to 61 in 1717 and reaching 18 families by 1788. In 1686 the existence of a synagogue is mentioned. When it burned down due to negligence, the Jewish community had to pay a fine of 10 thaler. In 1770 a new house of prayer was built with consent of the overlord. The Lauchheim Jews buried their dead in the cemetery at Aufhausen.<sup>33</sup>

In Pflaumloch, too, the number of Jews increased steadily after the Thirty Years’ War. In 1658 seven Jewish families were recorded. Ten years later the number had risen to nine and by 1687 there were 15 families. In 1731 Pflaumloch was assigned to the rural rabbinat of Wallerstein. In 1756, with the consent of the count, the 18 Jewish families there erected their own synagogue.<sup>34</sup>

After a while, the Jews who had been expelled by the count’s widow in 1658 were able to re-

turn to Aufhausen and Oberdorf, with Jews again being mentioned in Aufhausen from 1686 onwards. By 1705 their number had increased to 27 persons. In 1730 the Jewish community was given permission to build a synagogue, which in turn was replaced by a new building in 1777. Already in 1736 there were 26 Jewish families living in Aufhausen; by 1788 the number had increased to 36 families. The community belonged to the Oettingen rabbinat.<sup>35</sup>

As early as 1684, four Jewish families lived in Oberdorf, with their number rising to 26 families in 1723 and 37 families by 1748. In 1793 there were 53 Jewish families in Oberdorf (totaling 318 persons). The synagogue in Oberdorf, the same building that exists today, was consecrated in 1745.<sup>36</sup>

### Protected Jews

The Counts of Oettingen regulated the relationship with their Jewish subjects through letters of protection. Letters of protection may be seen as a kind of contract laying down all the main obligations and rights of the Jews.

### Bestowal of protection

The Counts of Oettingen issued a number of letters of protection to the Jews of Oberdorf between 1649 and 1806, which were valid for periods ranging from three to twenty years. They covered all aspects of the legal, economic, social and religious life of the Jews.

It was common practice that, on expiry of the protection period, the Jewish community would send a “copia memorial” petition to the count, requesting him to renew his protection.

Thereafter a new letter of protection would be issued.

In the preamble to each letter of protection it was stressed that granting protection was a huge act of mercy on the part of the count. It was then pointed out that all Jews including women, unmarried children and other dependents were included in the protection. For “as long as they were tolerated” the Jews were required to observe the provisions of the letter of protection and be “humble, faithful and obedient”.

### Taxation of protected Jews

In agreeing to the settlement of Jews on their territory, the counts were guided more by economic considerations than by humanity. Thus the amount of tax the Jews had to pay depended substantially on the counts’ requirements.

The numerous taxes levied on the Jews are listed in the Oberdorf Saal- und Lagerbuch (stock book) of 1793” Volume II.<sup>37</sup> In the chapter “Reminders of the Taxes on the Jewish Community in Oberdorf” these are listed as follows:

- a) house tax when a Jew possesses a house
- b) ground rent derived from this
- c) service payment
- d) protection money, and thereof
- e) ordinary protection tax
- f) cattle tax, then
- g) on these as well as on the house and protection taxes, the extra tax
- h) so-called horse money (Kleppergeld), then
- i) synagogue tax,

- j) goose money
- k) beverage levy, as well as
- l) money for kosher butchering, not less
- m) consensus payment on admission into protection, then
- n) departure or supplementary taxes

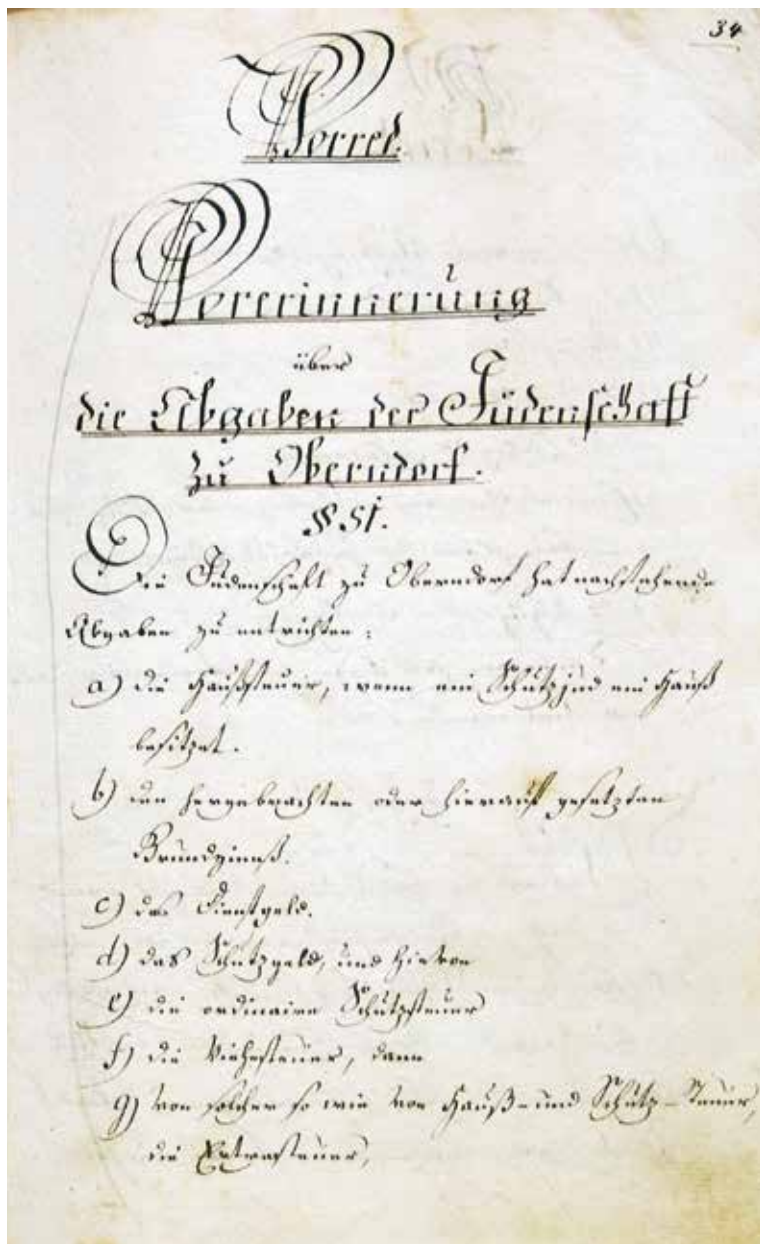
The house tax on Jewish houses was charged at the same rate as on Christian houses. The tax amount was between 100 and 170 gulden depending on the state of the house.<sup>38</sup>

The ground rent was paid in kind until 1695. Thereafter the tax had to be paid in money.

The service payment was a variation on the “hunting and hand service” Jews had previously had to provide. Dispensation from this was called a service payment to be paid by each owner of a house or part of a house; a family had to pay two gulden and half a family one gulden.<sup>39</sup>

The protection money had to be paid annually by each family irrespective of their assets. In 1793 the fee for a family was eight and for half a family four gulden. The amount could also be changed in each new letter of protection. “Moderation of the protection money at any time was at the mercy of the local ruler”.<sup>40</sup> From 1766 onwards many widowers and widows asked for the protection money to be lowered to the annual protection gulden.

The protection tax was calculated based on the protection money. For the amount of one gulden a protection tax of six kreuzer had to be paid; thus if the protection money was eight gulden, the protection tax was 48 kreuzer.<sup>41</sup>



6. Dues paid by the Jews in Oberdorf, 1793

The goose and horse money initially had to be paid in kind. Goose money had to be paid in cash as early as 1655. At that time four Jewish families paid 1 gulden and 30 kreuzer goose money for a year. In 1793 it was raised to 4 gulden. In the letter of protection of 1695, Wallerstein, Pflaumloch and Oberdorf were required to "... bring two suitable, healthy, good riding horses to our castle immediately after dispatch of this letter".<sup>42</sup> They had to be replaced every two to three years. But already in the letter of protection of 1728, the Jews of Oberdorf had to pay 30 gulden horse money to the revenue office in Flochberg. In the last letter of protection for Oberdorf, a riding horse was compensated for with an annual payment of 33 gulden and 20 kreuzer.<sup>43</sup>

The synagogue tax was a collective tax. In 1742 it was fixed in the letter of protection at five gulden.<sup>44</sup> From then on it remained unchanged.

The money for kosher butchering was based on the number of cattle the Jews were permitted to slaughter.

The beverage levy was a kind of tax on wine or other drinks. In the Oberdorf Saal- und Lagerbuch (stock book) of 1793 it is described as follows: "The beverage levy is charged on kosher and other beverages drunk by Jews, whatever they are called."

The departure or supplementary tax was charged when a Jew left the county to seek protection elsewhere and also wanted to take movable belongings with him. These belongings were subject to a supplementary tax of 10 %.

### Trade and the social status of Jews

To maintain their protection, which was essential to their survival, the Jews had above all to abide by the tenets of the letter of protection. In legal matters they were reliant on the first and second instances of the county judiciary. If they could not gain justice through the courts, they were allowed to bring their complaint before the count.

Within their community the rabbi or his deputy were allowed to "chastise Jews for disobedience". He was also entitled to impose fines of up to five gulden. However half of the revenue from the fines had to be passed on to the district authority. Depending on the protection period they were allowed to give shelter to fellow believers from elsewhere for 24 hours to three days without permission.

Jews were allowed to slaughter three cows per household and year. However, the cattle had first to be seen and inspected by approved meat appraisers. Jews were allowed to sell the meat surplus to their own needs to Christians. They were also allowed to produce kosher wine for domestic use and "ceremonies".

The businesses Jews could carry on were also closely defined. They were generally allowed to pursue all occupations and trades which did not harm Christians. However this considerably restricted what they could actually do. Thus their main occupations became bartering and trading, as well as dealing in cattle and property, and moneylending. However, Jews were also permitted to practice what was termed a "profession", on which a professional tax was levied. The Saal- und Lagerbuch (stock book) records

a Jew who carried on the "profession of tailor" in Oberdorf as from 1722.

Moneylending was allowed but under strict conditions. As with other trading activities, records had to be kept of all dealings whose value exceeded 24 gulden. To eliminate any doubt, interest rates were fixed in the letter of protection by the overlords as follows: in 1719 an interest rate of 5 %, in 1727 a rate of 6 %, in 1735 of 6 %, in 1752 of 8 %, in 1761 of 7 % and in 1788 a rate of 7 %. Those who did not comply with these rates risked severe punishment.<sup>45</sup>

From 1798 onwards, it was common practice to ask for security for a loan, which had to be described precisely in the agreement. If the debtor defaulted on his payment, the goods had to be taken to the administrative office where they were auctioned and the Jew received his money.<sup>46</sup>

The trade in plots of land, the purchase of gardens, fields, meadows and houses through purchase or exchange was not forbidden to Jews. However they were not allowed to live in houses purchased from Christians. Jews had to sell these fixed properties within a year of purchase at the latest.

There were strict regulations regarding cattle trading. The rules were mainly aimed at preventing the spread of disease. The Jewish tradesman was obliged to tell the buyer on request where the animals had come from and also to show the health certificate.<sup>47</sup>

Although the letters of protection came at a high price, and the requirements were con-

stantly increasing often without regard to the economic situation of those concerned, they did offer a certain security which the Jews felt was worth paying for.

### The 19th century

At the beginning of the 19th century, after division of the land into secular and ecclesiastical domains, the communities in the Ostalb region became part of the Kingdom of Württemberg. Aufhausen, Oberdorf, Lauchheim and Pflaumloch passed to Württemberg through a treaty with Bavaria in 1810. Step by step the protected Jews living here now became citizens of Württemberg.

The law passed in 1828 regarding the "public situation of members of the Israelite community"<sup>48</sup> was an important step forwards towards the equality of Jews as citizens. The law stipulated that Jews had to take on family names. The law also made it compulsory for Jewish children to attend school from the age of six until they were fourteen. Jews were also allowed to move to other towns provided they had a trade to secure their livelihood. However full equality with other citizens in Württemberg was only established by law of 1864.

The increased prosperity of the Jewish communities at the beginning of the 19th century was evident in vigorous building activity. Buildings were constructed which reflected the religious, cultural and social life of the Jews. Even prior to the law of 1828, Jewish communities were allowed to open their own schools. Jewish schools were established in Aufhausen and Oberdorf in 1823, in Lauchheim in 1829 and in Pflaumloch in 1832. In Oberdorf and



7. Jewish cemetery in Oberdorf

Pflaumloch the school buildings also included a ritual bath for women (Mikveh) and accommodation for the teacher. In 1824 the Oberdorf Jews built a cemetery; the Jews in Pflaumloch did not have their own graveyard until 1837. The graveyards had become necessary, because after 1810 the old Jewish burial ground in Wallerstein was located in Bavaria, and funerals across the state border involved a great deal of effort and many formalities.

New synagogues were built by Jewish communities in Aufhausen in 1823, in Pflaumloch in 1846, and the synagogue in Lauchheim was ex-

tended in 1856. The synagogue in Oberdorf had been established in 1745. In 1857 the Jews in Oberdorf received a sum of 200 gulden for the “reconstruction of their synagogue” from the Ministry of Church and School Affairs in Stuttgart. A request for 2300 gulden was made to the same ministry in 1885 for renovation of the rabbinat building and cemetery wall.<sup>49</sup>

In 1832 a regulation was issued “regarding the clerical administration of the Israelites of the realm”.<sup>50</sup> The 41 Jewish communities in Württemberg were divided into 13 new rabbinates. Oberdorf became the seat of one of

them (Number 8). The following communities in the Jagst district became part of the Oberdorf rabbinat: Oberdorf with 496 Jews, Aufhausen with 298 Jews, Pflaumloch with 235 Jews and Lauchheim with 111 Jews. In total there were 1140 members of the community. In some towns the Jews were almost 40 % of the total population. In 1838 there were 545 Jews in Oberdorf compared to 739 Christians living there at the time.<sup>51</sup> In the census of 1850, 378 Jews are recorded as living in Aufhausen, 548 in Oberdorf, 355 in Pflaumloch and 176 in Lauchheim.

From 1850, the recently founded Jewish communities in Bopfingen, Ellwangen and Schwäbisch Gmünd were added to the responsibilities of the rabbinat in Oberdorf. In Ellwangen there were 20 Jews in 1863, rising to 99 in 1886. In 1877 the Jewish community there had its own prayer room at the “Rössle” inn. In 1869 there were 22 Jews living in Gmünd with their number increasing to 67 persons by 1886. Only six Jews had settled in Bopfingen by 1880 so they used the facilities of the Jewish community in Oberdorf.

From 1832 to 1930 seven rabbis held office in the rabbinat in Oberdorf.<sup>52</sup> Probably the best known of them was Dr. Hermann Kroner who managed the affairs of the rabbinat for 33 years. He had studied at the Universities of Marburg and Heidelberg before gaining his doctorate in Tübingen with a thesis on Maimonides, the most important Jewish philosopher and doctor in the Middle Ages. He was honored at a special ceremony on his 60th birthday by the community in Oberdorf. Dr. Kroner died unexpected shortly afterwards on 30 July 1930. Following his death the Oberdorf rab-

binat became part of the rabbinat in Schwäbisch Hall. Dr. Hermann Kroner was buried in the Jewish cemetery in a family grave. His wife Sofie Kroner was deported on 22 August 1942 to Theresienstadt where all trace of her was lost.<sup>53</sup>

The Jews in Oberdorf made an important contribution to the economy as taxpayers. They also set up new businesses. As early as 1830 Veit Weil founded the glue, collagen and degreas factory whose products were also sold in France and America. In 1832 David Heimann founded a woven goods and textile factory which also employed seamstresses who worked from home. The Wassermann family ran a small draper’s shop and the Pappenheimer family owned a grocery store. Then there was the butchers shop run by the Neumetzger family, and the Schuster family’s bakery and café. Meanwhile the traditional horse and cattle businesses for which the Jews of Oberdorf were well known also flourished. When the railway from Stuttgart to Bopfingen opened in 1862, the cattle dealers were also able to supply the slaughterhouse in Stuttgart.<sup>54</sup>

From the second half of the 19th century the Jewish population in Oberdorf gradually declined. The reason for this was the recently granted freedom of establishment. Initially there was a wave of emigration to the USA, from 1855 until it subsided again in 1872, which involved a total of 86 Oberdorf Jews. Then, following the Equality Act in 1864, many Jews migrated to cities, attracted by the prospect of better earning opportunities.

In the Jewish communities there were some eminent personalities who became known

far beyond the borders of their own towns. Isaak Hess was born in Lauchheim in 1789 and settled in Ellwangen in 1823 as a bookseller and antiquarian. In 1830 he founded the Württemberg Association for the Support of Poor Israelite Orphans and Neglected Children, which continued in existence until the Third Reich. He died in 1866 and was buried in Aufhausen. Samuel Liebmann, who was born in 1799, also came from Aufhausen. However he left his hometown at an early age, emigrating to the USA in 1850 where he opened a successful brewery in New York.<sup>55</sup> Gabriel Hess was born in Aufhausen in 1817 and subsequently made a name for himself as a manufacturer in Paris.<sup>56</sup> Dr. David Essinger practiced as a doctor in Oberdorf. In recognition of his dedication and twenty-five years of “caring and tireless professional service”, and for his efforts as “doctor to the poor” of Oberdorf, he was granted the freedom of the town on 2 January 1869.<sup>57</sup>

### The 20th century

By the beginning of the 20th century the number of Jewish inhabitants in the villages had significantly declined due to emigration. This resulted in schools and synagogues closing in many Jewish communities.

In 1900 only 166 Jews remained in Oberdorf, 56 in Aufhausen, 32 in Lauchheim and 21 in Pflaumloch.<sup>58</sup>

The Jewish school in Aufhausen was closed in 1901 due to lack of pupils (there were only five). In 1910 the Jewish community, with only 21 members, continued as a branch of the

Oberdorf community until 1925. The synagogue in Aufhausen was closed in 1931. During the war it was used by the Hitler Youth.<sup>59</sup>

As there were no Jews living in Pflaumloch by 1906, the Jewish community was wound up. In 1907 the respected Jewish businessman Alexander von Pflaum donated the synagogue to the Pflaumloch town council. It was converted according to the plans of the donor and is today the Riesbürg town hall.<sup>60</sup> On the left of the main entrance there is a plaque commemorating the name of the donor.

In Lauchheim the Jewish school closed in 1914 due to lack of pupils. The synagogue was sold in 1921 and the Jewish community became a branch of the community in Oberdorf. In 1938 the synagogue in Lauchheim was desecrated and afterwards used as a barn.

Meanwhile the number of Jews in some towns increased again. In Ellwangen a prayer room was rented from 1926 to 1933 until it was closed down at the instigation of the Nazis. A total of 23 burials took place in the Jewish cemetery up to 1938. The Jewish community in Ellwangen was wound up in 1935. In Schwäbisch Gmünd the Jewish community had established a synagogue in 1926, but the interior was vandalized in 1934. Prior to the dissolution of the Jewish community there in July 1939, the synagogue was sold to the Kreissparkasse savings bank for 21,500 reichsmarks. In 1941, 22 Jews were deported from Gmünd.<sup>61</sup>

When the First World War broke out in 1914, 1674 of the 10,824 Jewish citizens in Württemberg and Hohenzollern served on the front. Of the 37 Jewish soldiers from Aufhausen,



Bopfingen and Oberdorf, five lost their lives. Their names are inscribed on a marble plaque in the Jewish cemetery in Oberdorf. Lauchheim, too, mourned the loss of one of their seven Jewish combatants, while Schwäbisch Gmünd lost four of its thirteen soldiers.<sup>62</sup>

In Oberdorf, after the National Socialists seized power in January 1933, strict rules of conformity were introduced and enforced in all areas of society, and acts of aggression against Jews began. Among the first measures taken against the Jews in Oberdorf, the freedom of the town granted to the respected businessman Karl Weil in 1921 was revoked, and the cattle trader Aron Meyer expelled from the town council. At the request of the Württemberg political police, a list of all the 87 Jews in Oberdorf was drawn up. The Jews were subjected to much harassment and injustice. The first businessman to become the object of Nazi hatred was David Heimann whose draper's shop was served with an official boycott on 1 April 1933.<sup>63</sup>

Other Jews were taken into "protective custody" for making derogatory remarks about Adolf Hitler. The Nazis also applied pressure to the Christians employed by the Jews, branding them "Jewish lackeys" and threatening them. On 1 October 1938 the Jewish cattle dealers had their trading licenses revoked, so that effectively they could no longer earn their living.<sup>64</sup>

Soon afterwards followed the terrible events of the Kristallnacht, where those involved did not even shrink from murder. In the early hours of 9 November 1938 the Jews Julius and Josef Schuster were picked up by SA ad-

jutant Roos and his henchmen and driven by car to the neighboring countryside. They were then thrown out of the car and made to run across the fields with the SA men firing after them. Josef Schuster was shot and killed while Julius Schuster was wounded.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, the same day, SA storm troopers from Ellwangen arrived in Oberdorf and announced to SA Sturmführer Böss that they had come to set fire to the synagogue. When Böss refused to have anything to do with this "action", they finally had to withdraw without achieving their objective. In the early hours of 11 November 1938 the SA men tried again; they managed to get into the synagogue by breaking a window, and set fire to documents and some of the furniture. However, local residents soon spotted the fire and the Christians Lotte and Fritz Mahler together with Mrs. Scherup, and the Jews Gustav Lamm and Isaak Lehmann were able to extinguish it. After the Kristallnacht the synagogue was closed.<sup>66</sup>

Some Oberdorf Jews were arrested during the evening of 9 November 1938; they were detained in Bopfingen and deported to Dachau the next day. David Heimann has left a record of the inhuman treatment to which the Jews, some of them over 60 years old, were subjected to during the month they were held in Dachau.

Following the Kristallnacht the number of Jews in Oberdorf temporarily increased due to the forced expulsion of 54 Jews from nearby towns and villages. They were put up by their fellow believers. However it would not be long before 88 of the Jews living in Oberdorf were deported in four trains (from December 1941 to August 1942) to the extermination camps of

the Third Reich. After that there were no more Jews left in Oberdorf. Only one Jewess born in Oberdorf survived the concentration camp, her name was Meta Meyer.

In the course of the compulsory sale of Jewish property in 1939, the synagogue was sold to the Oberdorf town council, who in turn sold it one year later to the local gymnastics club. During the war, forced laborers were housed in the former synagogue. After the war the former synagogue was converted into a catholic church. In 1968 the building was acquired by a tradesman and used as storage space.

#### After the war

The idea of putting the building to a more worthy use was first put forward at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1989 the "Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf" was set up, which then purchased the building and completely restored it almost to its state prior to 1940. The intention from the start was not to create a house of prayer but rather to use the building as a memorial and meeting place. On 25 November 1993 the memorial and meeting place was officially opened at an appropriate ceremony. Karl Heiman, who had emigrated to the USA as child, came over specially for the occasion and donated his family's Torah scroll.

The next step was now to research the history of the Jews in Oberdorf and the surrounding Ostalb region. To this end, the "Museum of the History of Jews in the Ostalb Region" was opened at the memorial and meeting place in 1997.

During a visit to the museum in the year 2000, the families of Sandra and Bernhard Noymer with their children Ruth and Edward Budelmann, Janet and James Noymer, Karen and Douglas Sprenger, and Carol and Michael Noymer from the USA generously decided to make a donation to the museum in the form of a large showcase with many Jewish ritual artifacts, which is now on display in the lecture hall at the former synagogue.

The museum's main focus and concept is to present the history of the Jews of Oberdorf and their synagogue. But since the museum is the only one of its kind in the surrounding area, the concept has been expanded to cover the history of all Jewish communities in the region. The premises are used to host a wide variety of lively cultural events, such as exhibitions, lectures and concerts, not to mention the guided tours of the museum. In this way it has been possible to draw the attention of many thousands of visitors to the history, culture and traditions of the Jews in Oberdorf and the entire Ostalb region.



8. One of the display cabinets with religious artifacts in Oberdorf

## Former synagogue in Oberdorf

1704

The Oberdorf Jews pay synagogue tax. This indicates the existence of the first synagogue, but there is no further information about it.

1711

Establishment of a Jewish community in Oberdorf

1745

According to a description by the Oberamt Neresheim in 1872, "the existing synagogue was consecrated" by the Jewish community in this year.

1809 – 1812

After the synagogue had apparently fallen into disrepair, a new building is erected on the foundation of the old synagogue using the old floor and other parts of the old structure; it was completed in 1812.

1832

"Order regarding the ecclesiastical subdivision of the Israelites of the Kingdom".

The 41 Jewish communities in Württemberg are allocated to 13 new rabbinates.

Oberdorf becomes the seat of Rabbinat No. 8.

This includes communities in the Jagst district: Oberdorf with 496 Jews, Aufhausen with 298 Jews, Pflaumloch with 235 Jews, and Lauchheim with 111 Jews (1140 in all).

1847

According to a report by the Oberamt, the synagogue is in a "poor state of repair".

1857

With the aid of a state subsidy of 200 gulden, the interior of the synagogue is refurbished.

1930

The Oberdorf rabbinat is merged with the rabbinat in Schwäbisch Hall.

1933

The synagogue is renovated.

1938

Kristallnacht 9/10 November 1938: The local SA commander Böss sends away SA storm troopers from another district, who had come to destroy the synagogue. Only in the early hours of 11 November did SA men force their way into the synagogue by breaking a window, setting fire to the books and documents they found there. However neighbors soon noticed the fire. According to existing testimonies both Christians and Jews were involved in the fire-fighting operations: Lotte and Fritz Mahler, Mrs. Scherup, Gustav Lamm and Isaak Lehmann.

The structure of the synagogue remained undamaged.

1939

Acquisition of the Oberdorf synagogue by Oberdorf Town Council.

1940

The synagogue is sold to the Oberdorf gymnastics club and used as a gymnasium. It is later used to house Polish and Russian forced laborers.

1950

Acquisition of the former synagogue by Oberdorf Catholic Parish (formed by an influx of many displaced persons). Conversion into a church, installation of a wooden ridge turret.

1968

The Catholic parish builds a new, larger church (consecrated in 1969) leading to the sale of the synagogue building. Afterwards it is used as storage space.

1989

The newly-founded Support Association purchases the former synagogue. After preliminary inspections, the building is renovated and the mural uncovered. A large genizah was discovered in the attic. It mainly contained prayer books that were no longer useable.

The ridge turret is removed. The association aims to restore the building to its former state prior to 1940, when it was still used as a synagogue.

As there are no pictures of the interior, there is no attempt to create an accurate reconstruction. The comprehensive building works are financed by subsidies from the State of Baden-Württemberg, Ostalb Region, Bopfingen Town Council, and the Ostalb Kreissparkasse (savings bank), as well as numerous donors both from Germany and abroad.

1993

With refurbishment of the interior completely funded by donations, the former synagogue is opened as a Memorial and Meeting Place on 25 November.

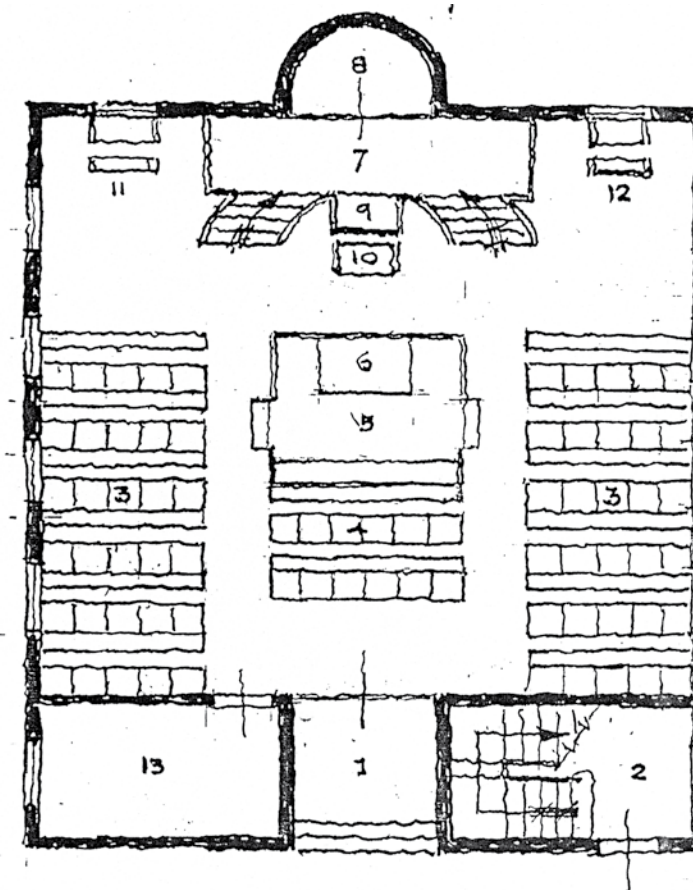
1997

On and below what was the women's gallery, the "Museum of the History of Jews in the Ostalb Region" is opened to the public. It describes the history of Jewry in Germany from its beginnings until 1942, with the main focus on Oberdorf.

## SYNAGOGUE IN OBERDORF

AS RECALLED BY  
CHAIM (HEINER) HEIMANN, HOD HASWARON / ISRAEL

DRAWN BY  
ARTHUR REIS, HOD HASWARON / ISRAEL  
AUGUST 1988



GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
1:100



9. The synagogue around 1900



10. Former synagogue in Oberdorf, 1988

- 1 ENTRANCE
- 2 ENTRANCE TO THE STAIRCASE TO THE WOMEN'S GALLERY
- 3 2 X 6 ROWS OF MEN'S SEATS
- 4 2 X 6 ROWS OF BOYS' SEATS
- 5 PODIUM
- 6 ALMEMOR (TABLE FOR READING THE TORAH PORTION)
- 7 PODIUM FOR LIFTING OUT THE TORAH SCROLLS
- 8 COUPBOARD FOR STORAGE OF THE TORAH SCROLLS
- 9 PREACHER'S PULPIT
- 10 PRAYER LEADER'S SEAT (ERLEBACHER)
- 11 SEAT OF THE RABBI (DR. KRONER)
- 12 SEAT OF SYNAGOGUE ELDER
- 13 STORAGE ROOM

11. Sketch by Chaim Heimann, and Arthur Reis

# The inscriptions of the former Oberdorf synagogue

## Exterior

There are two inscriptions on the outside. The text from the book of Genesis (28, 17) begins over the women's entrance (on the right) and continues over the men's entrance.

How awesome is this place!

This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

## Offerory box of the Jewish community

Inscription:  
A donation for the poor



14. Offerory box



12. Men's entrance



13. Women's entrance

## Interior, east wall

This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter. (Psalm 118)

Know before whom you stand, you stand before God

The first words of the Ten Commandments

The Torah crown

In the inscriptions of the two round arches there are dots above the Hebrew characters which make them into numerals. When added together this gives the dates 572 (top) and 603 of the small Jewish numbering (without the thousand), which when converted give the years 1811/1812 and 1842/1843 A.D.

The Menorah by Georg Sternbacher

According to Bloch's "principle of hope" the menorah represents the history of Judaism: a burnt wooden cube made up of twelve individual blocks of wood stands on six lead baseplates; for Sternbacher a material with sinister connotations. Out of these ruins, the menorah is growing in the form of a tree which is already showing signs of its first buds, but still needs to be cared for. In the alcove of the Torah shrine, a burnt timber plank symbolizes the door of the synagogue after the Kristallnacht.



15. East wall with the Menorah by Georg Sternbacher

# The Torah scrolls of the Oberdorf synagogue

In biblical language Torah means the teaching or instruction of individuals, but the word is also a name for compilations of statutory texts. In a more restricted sense Torah designates God's revelation handed down to Moses at Mount Sinai and the five books of Moses, also called the Pentateuch. Traditionally the Torah is written by hand on illuminated parchment. Printed letters are used for better legibility. The Torah is kept in a shrine.

## The Torah shrine

According to a list, there were seventeen Torah scrolls in the Oberdorf synagogue. Fourteen of them were confiscated together with other important documents after the Kristallnacht. Two were taken by an Oberdorf citizen, Daniel Schwarz, who handed them over after the war to Rabbi Eskin, an American. Their trail goes cold in Paris.

## The Torah portion

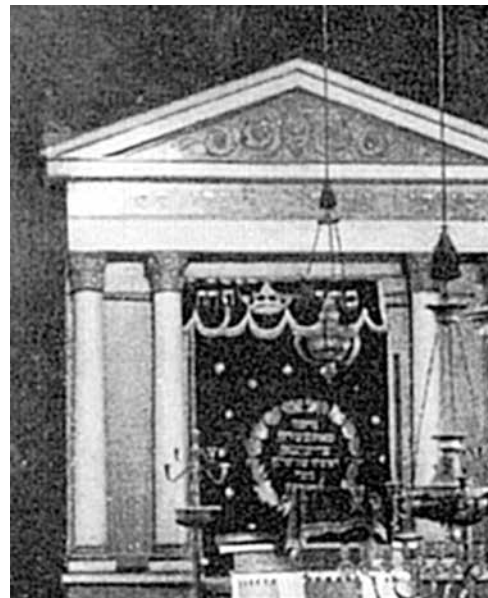
This shows hand-written Hebrew verses from the 3rd book of Moses and dates back to the 16th/17th century. The Torah portion was presented as a permanent loan to the Chairman of the Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf, Dr. Diethelm Winter, by Deacon Hans Hetzel on 19 February 1992.

## The Heimann Torah

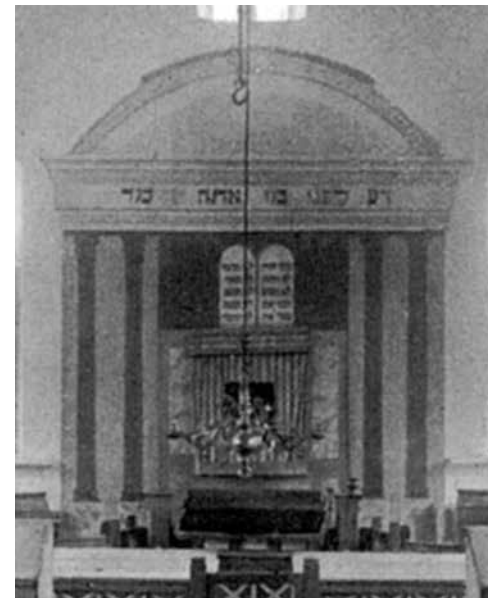
What is thought to be the last of the seventeen Torah scrolls was presented to the Support Association, as a permanent loan, by Karl Heimann at the opening ceremony for the Memorial and Meeting Place on 25 November 1993.

The Heimann family Torah was originally donated to the synagogue by Chaim Loeb Heimann in 1845. To celebrate the victory of Germany over France in the war of 1870/1871, a curtain and silver fittings were added to the Torah shrine. In August 1939 this Torah accompanied the Heimann family on their journey to the USA. During World War II the Heimann family made their Torah scroll available to Jewish soldiers for use in a synagogue near Fort Dix.

After the war the US Army returned the Torah scroll to the Heimann family. The Torah scroll was then displayed in the Synagogue at East Meadow, Long Island, New York "In memory of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust".



16. Torah shrine in the Pflaumloch synagogue around 1900



17. Torah shrine in the Aufhausen synagogue before 1931



18. Torah portion from the 16th/17th century



Note: After emigrating to the USA, the Heimanns changed the spelling of their surname to one „n“.

19. Torah scroll of the Heimann family

## Origins

Between the 8th and 6th centuries BC Jewish communities grew up in Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and Egypt. By the beginning of the Christian era, Jews had also settled in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean lands. These diaspora communities were already larger than the population in the home country. Although geographically scattered, the Jewish peoples remain unified by their religious conviction with the center of their cult being the temple sanctuary in Jerusalem.

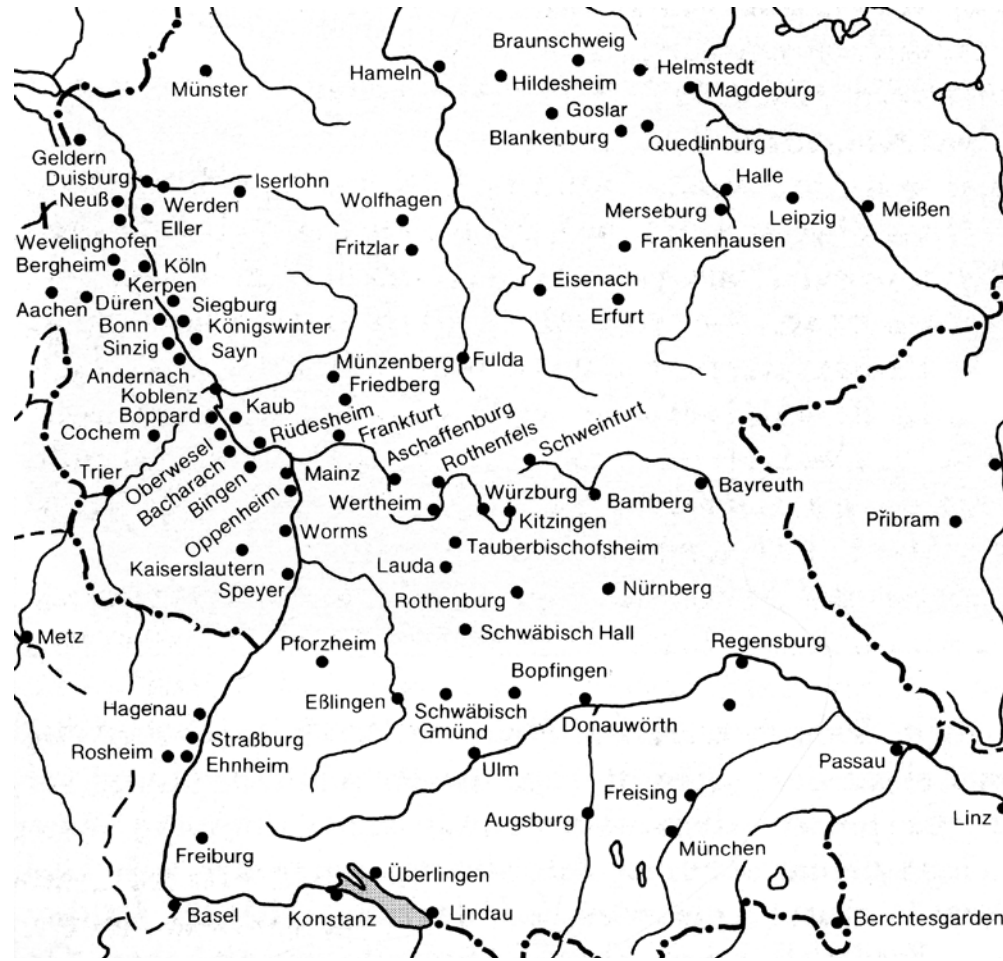
The destruction of the second, Herodian temple in Jerusalem, in the year 70 AD by the Roman legions under Titus, marked the end of the Jewish state. This meant that the Jews were now deprived of their central focus. However, a strong cultural, religious and emotional bond to Jerusalem persisted. In the wake of the Roman army, many Jews came to Central Europe.

## The first Jewish communities in Germany

The first documentary evidence of Jews in Germany, from the year 321 AD, is in a letter from Emperor Constantine to the city of Cologne, where evidently a Jewish community existed at the time. It is likely that there were also other Jewish communities or settlements in the towns founded by the Romans along the Rhine, Mosel and Danube rivers.

## The Jews in the Middle Ages

From the 6th to the 9th centuries, many sources document the presence of Jews in the territories of the Franconian kings as merchants,



20. Map of Jewish communities in Germany before 1238

landowners, customs officials, doctors and masters of the mint. Charlemagne and his successors took the Jews under their protection, enabling them to dedicate themselves fully to their religious, cultural and economic activities. Between the 10th and 13th centuries there were many Jewish communities in Germany,

e.g. in Speyer, Worms, Mainz, Cologne, Bamberg, Regensburg and elsewhere. This was the zenith of German Jewry. During the crusades, from 1096 AD onwards, life became increasingly difficult for the Jews: fanatical crusaders murdered many defenseless Jews out of religious hatred when they refused to be baptized.

## Legal status

The 4th Lateran Council in 1215, under Pope Innocent III, brought fundamental changes in the life of Jews. The old ecclesiastical policy of discrimination was completely reformulated. In 1236, as a direct consequence, the Staufer Emperor Frederick II granted privileges to the Jews in his empire. He made them “imperial chamber servants” (SERVI CAMERAE REGIS). This status put them under the direct protection of the emperor, and they now became his property. This meant protection on country roads and lanes, and freedom of movement and residence. The emperor was free to loan, pledge or sell this seignorage. At this time Jews were also excluded from becoming members of guilds, so their previous sources of income from crafts, trades and commerce were now closed to them. The only remaining ways to earn a living were moneylending and pawn-broking, activities which were forbidden to Christians by the Church.

## Canons of the 4th Lateran Council

1. Jews had to pay the Church a tithe on their estate.
2. Jews had to wear clothing that differentiated them from Christians (Jewish hat).
3. Jews were excluded from public office.
4. Voluntarily converted Jews were to be prevented from reverting to Judaism.

## Jews in the imperial towns

The centers of Jewish life in the Middle Age are the towns where the Jews worked mainly as moneylenders and money changers, but also as doctors. A list of income taxes from the imperial towns from the year 1241, in the reign of Emperor Frederick II, provides the first traces of Jewish life in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Bopfingen and Donauwörth.

At the time, the imperial town of Nördlingen was exempt from these taxes for a period of five years following a major fire.

The tax amounts on the imperial tax list of 1241 give an indication of the size of the Jewish communities:

	Taxes of the town	Taxes on the Jews
Bopfingen	50 silver marks	2 silver marks (with Donauwörth)
Schwäbisch Gmünd	150 silver marks	12 silver marks
For comparison:		
Ulm	80 silver marks	6 silver marks
Esslingen	70 silver marks	30 silver marks
Constance	60 silver marks	20 silver marks

## Development of rural Jewry

The status of the Jews in the 13th and 14th centuries as imperial chamber servants did not protect them from further massive persecution. Examples from our region:

### 1298

The Rintfleisch pogrom: The nobleman Rintfleisch used the alleged desecration of the host by Jews in Röttingen as an excuse to wipe out Jewish communities, first in Franconia and then in Swabia: Gunzenhausen, Wassertrüdingen, Spielberg, Oettingen, Nördlingen and Hürnheim

### 1348/1349

The plague (Black Death) in Europe, for which the Jews were held responsible. Bopfingen is recorded as a “place of martyrdom”.

At the latest following the Black Death pogroms, many Jews fled the towns to the relatively safe territories of the nobility. They were able to continue trading in the towns, because they were now under the protection of their overlords, making them unassailable there.

## Jews in the County of Oettingen

On 30 May 1331 Emperor Ludwig IV the Bavarian granted permission to the old Count Ludwig of Oettingen to settle Jews in his territories, as follows:

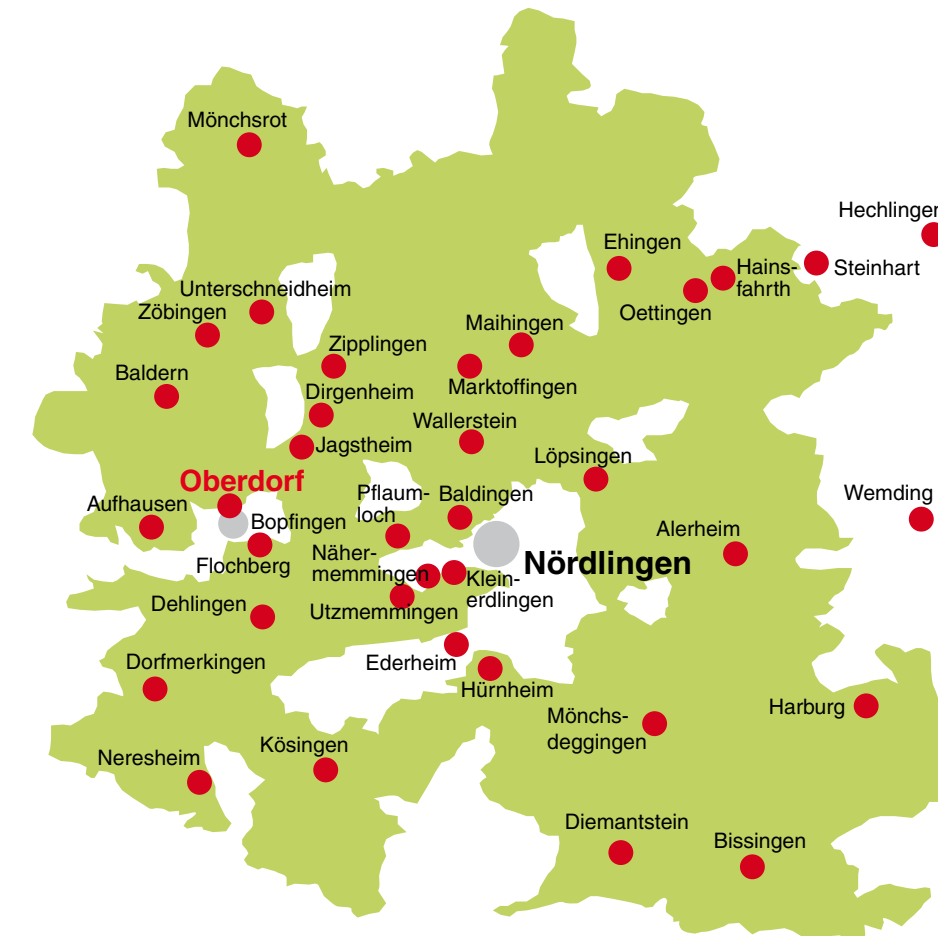
*We Ludwig, Roman Emperor by the Grace of God, at all times seeking to enhance the empire, do hereby publicly proclaim in this letter that we have permitted the noble Ludwig, the old Count of Oettingen, our loyal servant, with this letter to receive all the Jews who have already settled down with him, who travel to him or who will settle down with him and to use them with all rightful privileges and good customs until we revoke this right. Also we command that they are kept safe and that no one harms them or lays hands on them.*

*With this document with our imperial seal written in Nuremberg in the thirteen hundredth and thirty-first year after Christ's birth, in the seventieth year of our realm and the fourth of this empire we certify to this.*

This first Jewish seignorage in the County of Oettingen, which retrospectively legitimized the existing circumstances, was renewed repeatedly by successive emperors.

### Jewish settlements in the County of Oettingen and the imperial towns of Bopfingen and Nördlingen

Place	Jews recorded	
	from	to
Bopfingen	1241	1545
Nördlingen	1241	1942
Hohentrüdingen	1298	
Hürnheim	1298	
Oettingen	1298	1899
Spielberg	1298	
Dürrwang	1331	1650
Baldern	1344	1658
Harburg	1348	1942
Wallerstein	1348	1899
Wemding	1429	1474
Baldingen	1433	1682
Hainsfahrt	1434	1899
Offingen	1438	
Kleinerdingen	1458	1899
Neresheim	1459	1658
Dischingen	1464	1650
Löpsingen	1465	1727
Maihingen	1479	1663
Ehingen	1487	1609
Gerolfingen	1487	
Pflaumloch	1487	1907
Utzmemmingen	1487	1625
Ederheim	1503	1874
Flochberg	1514	1538
Bissingen	1519	1658
Diemanstein	1519	
Zöbingen	1520	1539
Mögesheim	1538	1659
Zipplingen	1538	
Dorfmerkingen	1555	1660
Aufhausen	1560	1942
Steinhart	1560	1883
Hechlingen	1561	
Dehlingen	1587	1611
Kösingen	1587	1607
Oberdorf	1587	1942
Schopfloch	1587	1899
Mönchsrot	1593	1899
Dirgenheim	1595	
Unterschneidheim	1595	1689
Jagstheim	1601	1626
Alerheim	1671	1680
Mönchsdeggingen	1684	1879



21. Towns with protected Jews in the County of Oettingen

## The first protected Jews in Oberdorf



22. View of Bopfingen and Oberdorf

Oberdorf at the foot of the Ipf is first mentioned in a document dated 1268. As was the case with most of the villages in the old Empire, in Oberdorf, too, there were several feudal overlords. The most important were the Town of Bopfingen, and the Counts of Oettingen, in whom high authority was vested.

As in over 40 other towns and villages in the County of Oettingen, the counts very soon settled Jews here in Oberdorf. They were accepted under the protection of the count, which was guaranteed in so-called “letters of protection”, in return for the payment of heavy taxes.

The start of the settlement of Jews is a matter of contention but there are several indications that it was in the year 1510.

The first direct record is the mention of Oberdorf Jews attending the Nördlingen Pentecostal Fair of 1587.

Further sources yield sparse records of the names and numbers of Jews in Oberdorf up to the beginning of the 18th century:

**1595**

In the “Interest and Debt Booklet”, four Jewish families are recorded in Oberdorf: Joseph, Jässle, Lew and Anschal.

**1604 to 1609**

Only three Jews are named: Moises, Marx and Jässle.

**1610**

In the description of taxes, only one Jew is recorded as living in Oberdorf: Joseph.

**1615**

It is recorded that Salomon Hirsch, a protected Jew from Oberdorf, had a legal dispute with Abraham, a protected Jew from Aufhausen.

**1618 to 1648**

The Thirty Years War: The Jews fled from marauding, plundering armies and sought protection back in the fortified towns and cities. There is no longer any mention of Jews in Oberdorf.

**1648**

After the end of the Thirty Years War, the Jews who had fled started to return to their old vil-

lages. This made it necessary to establish new rules and conditions under which they could enjoy the protection of the various branches of the House of Oettingen in their respective territories. Prior to 1649, for the Oberdorf Jews as for Jews elsewhere, there were individual letters of protection, but from now on “general letters of protection” were issued covering whole communities.

**1649**

The first general letter of protection for the entire County of Oettingen also included Oberdorf.

**1652**

The letter of protection from 1649 was renewed for three years.

**1655**

The letter of protection from 1649 was renewed for a further three years.

**1656**

There were five Jewish families in Oberdorf (about 25 persons): Lew, Marx from Baldern, Koppel from Baldern, Moises from Aufhausen and Markus.

**1659**

Temporary expulsion of Jews from Baldern, Aufhausen and Oberdorf by the dowager Countess Isabella.

**1684 to 1687**

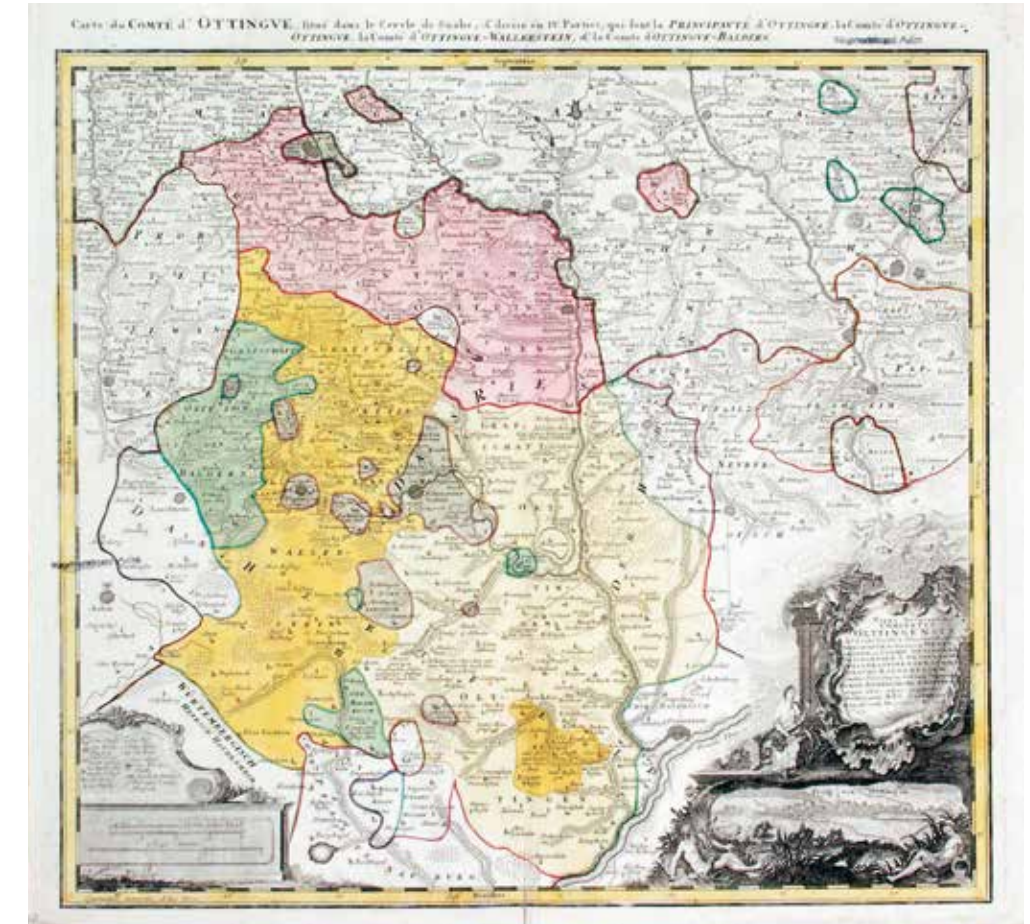
There were four Jewish families in Oberdorf (about 20 persons).

**1688**

There were six Jewish families in Oberdorf (about 30 persons).

**1695**

The letter of protection states that “as previously” the Rabbi or his deputy in Oberdorf may fine disobedient Jews the sum of five gulden. On payment of an appeal fee of three gulden, the case could be given a second hearing before the administration.



23. Map of the County of Oettingen, 1744

# Jewish community in Oberdorf

In the 16th and 17th centuries there were always between four and six Jewish families living in Oberdorf as protected Jews, with a similar situation in many other villages in the County of Oettingen.

For the year 1688, six families were mentioned in Oberdorf, but by 1723 this had already risen to 26 families (approx. 130 persons). This increase in population indicates a significant settlement of protected Jews by the Counts of Oettingen. Their origins are unknown. A description by the Oberamt suggests they were Jews expelled from Essingen and “allegedly also French Jews” (around 1704).

Only then was the number of persons large enough for them to establish their own community, which was founded in 1711. The only detailed records about the situation of the Oberdorf Jews at that time are the letters of protection.

## Letters of protection

The letters of protection issued by the Counts of Oettingen allowed Jews to settle on their territory in Oberdorf. Granting a letter of protection is described in many of the documents as an act of mercy. In the letters of protection it is noted that the Jews could be expelled entirely from the county at any time, even during the protection period. Thus the letters of protection were no ultimate guarantee. Their duration was limited to between 3 and 20 years. Renewal of protection had to be dearly bought by paying “consensus money”.

The letters of protection also governed readmission into protection: Foreign Jews had to show proof of assets to a value of 600 gulden, or 400 gulden in the case of future family members.

The rights and duties of the “protected Jews” were strictly regulated:

### The Jews had to

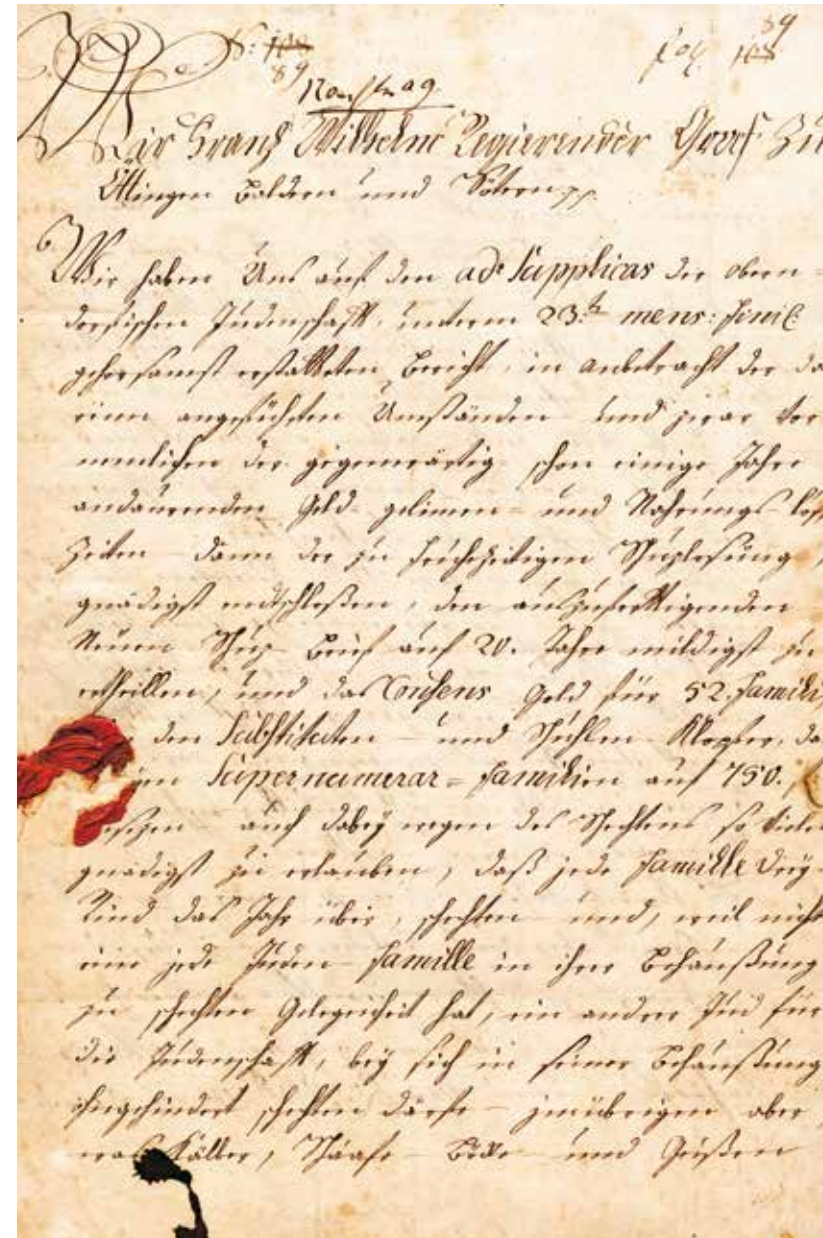
- be subordinate, loyal and obedient
- pay taxes on time
- be quiet on Sundays and Christian holidays
- leave Christian buyers the right of first refusal at all times
- in legal disputes submit to the highest instance of the county administration.

### The Jews were allowed to

- “practice all kinds of crafts and trades which were not detrimental to guild craftsmen” (such as among others: broker, cattle dealer, tailor, butcher, baker and merchant.)
- accommodate foreign Jews for up to three days
- lend money at the fixed interest rate of 8 %
- regulate their internal affairs themselves, the highest authority being the rabbi
- freely choose their community leaders.

### The Jews were forbidden to

- ask for protection anywhere else without the knowledge of their overlord
- trade in church paraphernalia or items bearing the Count’s coat of arms.
- Compliance had to be sworn with “a genuine Jewish oath”.



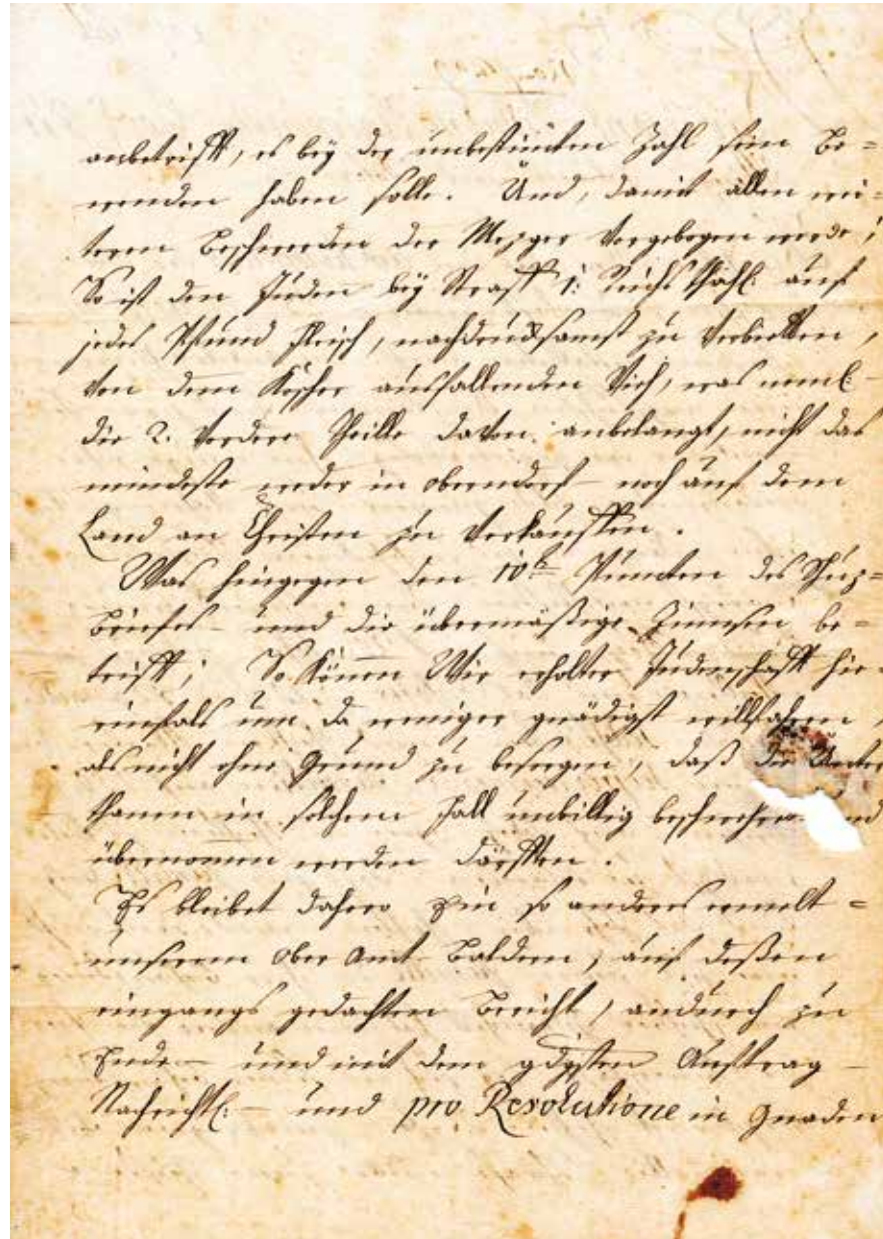
24. Addendum to Letter of Protection of 1778, page 1

### Addendum

We, Franz Wilhelm, Count of Oettingen, Baldern and Stötern ...

*Wir haben Uns auf den ad Supplicas der obern dorfher Judenschaft, in dem 23 mens: Jinil: gehorsamst erstatteten Bericht, in anbeacht der darin angeführten Umständen und zwar vornehmlichen der gegenwärtig, schon einige Jahre andauernden Geld = gelimen = und Nabrungslos Zeiten dann der zu vorzeitigen Schutzlosungen, gnädigst entschlossen, den auszufertigenden Neuen Schutz-Brief auf 20. Jahre mildigst zu erteilen, und das Consens Geld für 52 Familien und den Substituten - und den Schulen Klopfer, dann auch Supernumerar-Familien auf 790 fl. anzusetzen-auch dabey wegen des Schächtens so vieles gnädigst zu erlauben, daß jede Familie drei Rind das Jahr über, Schächten und, weil nicht eine jede Judenfamilie in ihrer Behausung zu schächten Gelegenheit hat, ein anderer Jud für die Judenschaft, bey sich in seiner Behausung ungehindert schächten derse-imübrigen aber, was Kälber, Schafe-Böcke und Geisen*



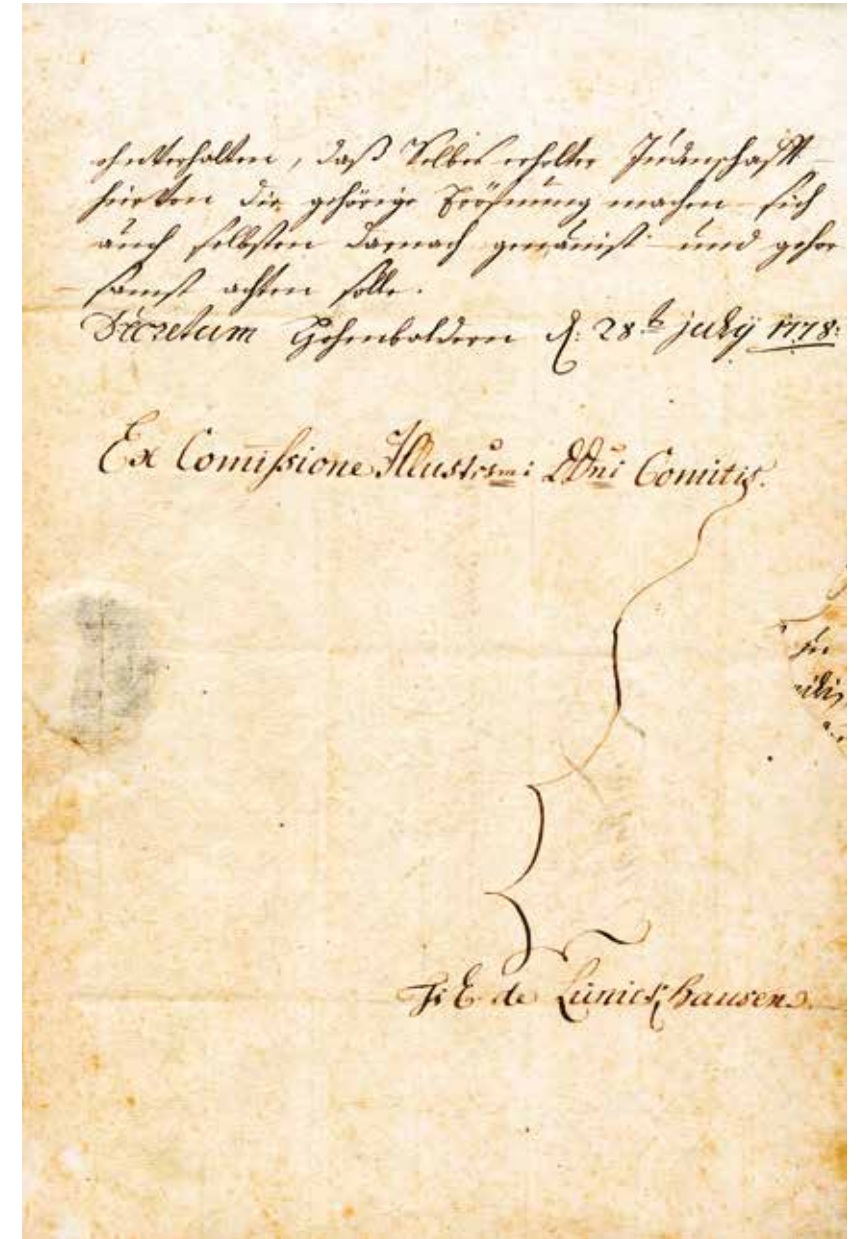


25. Addendum to Letter of Protection of 1778, page 2

anbetriß, es bey der unbestimmten Zahl sein be-  
 wenden haben solle. Und, damit allen wei-  
 teren Beschwerden der Metzger Vorgebogen werde;  
 So ist den Juden bey Straf 1: Reichs (?) auf  
 jedes Pfund Fleisch nachdrucksamst zu verbitten,  
 von dem Koscher ausfallenden Vieh, was mal nämlich  
 der 2. Vorder Theille davon anbelangt, nicht das  
 mindeste weder in Oberdorf - noch auf dem  
 Lande an Christen zu Verkaufen.  
 Was hingegen den 10ten Punkten des Schutz-  
 briefes – und der übermäßige Zinsen be-  
 trifft; So können Wir erholter Judenschaft hier  
 einfals um da weniger gnädigst willfahren,  
 als nicht ohne Grund zu besorgen, daß die Unter-  
 thanen im solchen Fall unbillig beschworen und  
 übernommen werden derften.  
 Es bleibet dahero ein so anders ermelten  
 unserem Ober Amt –Baldern, aus diesem  
 eingangs gedachten Bericht, andurch zu  
 Ende und mit dem gnädigsten Auftrag-  
 Nachrichtlich und pro Resolutione in Gnaden

onverhalten das selbige Judenschaft  
 hiervon die gehörige Eröffnung machen - sich  
 auch selbsten darnach gemäsigt und gehor-  
 samst achten solle.  
 Decretum Hohenbaldern 28. Juli 1778  
 Ex Comissione Illustrissimi DDni Comitiss  
 F. E. de Lünichshausen  
 (?)=nicht lesbar

The letter of protection was issued by the overlord in this case by the Counts of Oettingen. It was vital to the existence of the Jews as it offered the Jewish community the opportunity to settle on the Counts' territory and live there.  
 In the letter of protection the overlord meticulously specified the conditions for the protection which were defined as precisely as in a contract. A letter of protection included up to 16 different taxes that the Jewish community had to pay for their protection.  
 The letter of protection shown here is an amended version to the letter of protection of 1778. The amendment is exceptional in that it was issued for 20 years; most letters of protection were valid for a much shorter period. The following was regulated by the amendment to the letter of protection: The money to be paid for issuing the document was fixed at 790 gulden and covered 52 families and their dependents in Oberdorf. The Jews were allowed to slaughter livestock, but the sale of meat to Christians was forbidden under pain of punishment. It was also underscored that, in monetary transactions, the Jews had to abide by the interest rates set in the letter of protection. The Oberamt Baldern was charged with making public the amendment to the letter of protection.



26. Addendum to Letter of Protection of 1778, page 3

## Jewish community in the 19th and 20th centuries

The start of the 19th century marked the beginning of a new era for the Jews. Through the state treaty of 1810, Oberdorf and the district around Bopfingen became part of the Kingdom of Württemberg, which was striving to integrate Jews as citizens with equal rights. Following the first equality laws, the events of 1848 brought the long desired freedom to settle, for Jews as well as for others. As a result there was huge migration to the cities, but also to America, which led to the demise of many rural communities around the turn of the century. The last of the equality laws, in 1864, finally made the Jews in Württemberg fully-fledged citizens with all rights and duties; a status which they retained until the rise of the Nazi dictatorship.

1812

The “Royal Decree on the Compulsory Service of Jews” and other regulations from 27 February to 5 March 1812 declared that the duties of Jews were the same as those of the rest of the population.

This was the first step towards the civil equality of Jews, but their status as protected Jews remained.

1828

“Law regarding the public relationships of the Israelite community” dated 25 April 1828.

For the Jews this was the second important step towards civil equality:

- Obligation to take on a family name (the form being subject to approval and payment of a fee)
- Relocation to other communities in the kingdom became possible under certain conditions (but not if the source of income was “haggling”, hawking, second-hand dealing, pawnbroking, cattle trading, or cattle lending)

- Compulsory education for Jewish children from the age of 6 to 14
- Right of the Jewish community to found a school provided the salary for the teacher was assured
- They were no longer considered “protected Jews”

1832

A regulation was issued “regarding the clerical administration of the Israelites of the realm”. The 41 Jewish communities in Württemberg were assigned to 13 new rabbinate. Oberdorf became the seat of Rabbinate No. 8, which included the communities in the Jagst district.

1845

The struggle for equality

In March 1845 Dr. Karl Weil submitted a petition he had drafted in the name of 11,000 Israelites in Württemberg to the Assembly of the Estates.

1848

The National Assembly in Frankfurt succeeds in reaching agreement about a comprehensive law defining the fundamental rights of the German people.

1849

Order regarding the introduction of the fundamental rights of the German people: “All discriminations and differences in public and private law, which up to now by law were associated with belonging to a religion other than the three Christian denominations are abolished...”. This implied freedom of settlement for the Jews in Württemberg (confirmed by an order of 1851 as an interim solution until a law could be drafted and passed).

1850

Start of the emigration to America.

The first people to emigrate from Oberdorf were:

- Samuel Guttman,
- Salomon Henle and
- Jette Oberdorfer.

1861

“Law regarding the independence of civic rights from religious confession” Gave Jews the right to vote and stand for election to the Assembly of Estates in Württemberg.

1864

“Law regarding the public relationships of the Israelite community”

Art. 1: “The Israelites domiciled in the kingdom, in all civil relationships, are subject to the same laws as apply to other citizens, they have the same rights and duties, and have the same obligations of service.”

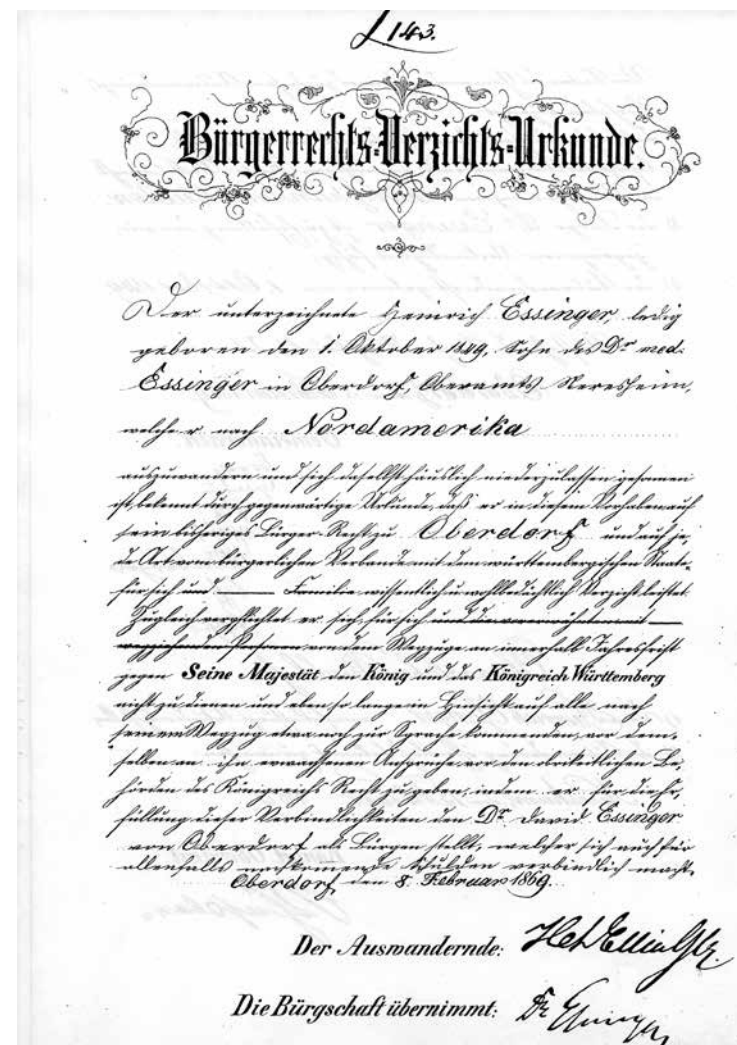
1914 – 1918

World War I: Out of a total of 10,824 German Jewish inhabitants of Württemberg and Hohenzollern, 1674 served in the war as front-line soldiers, of whom 270 were killed.

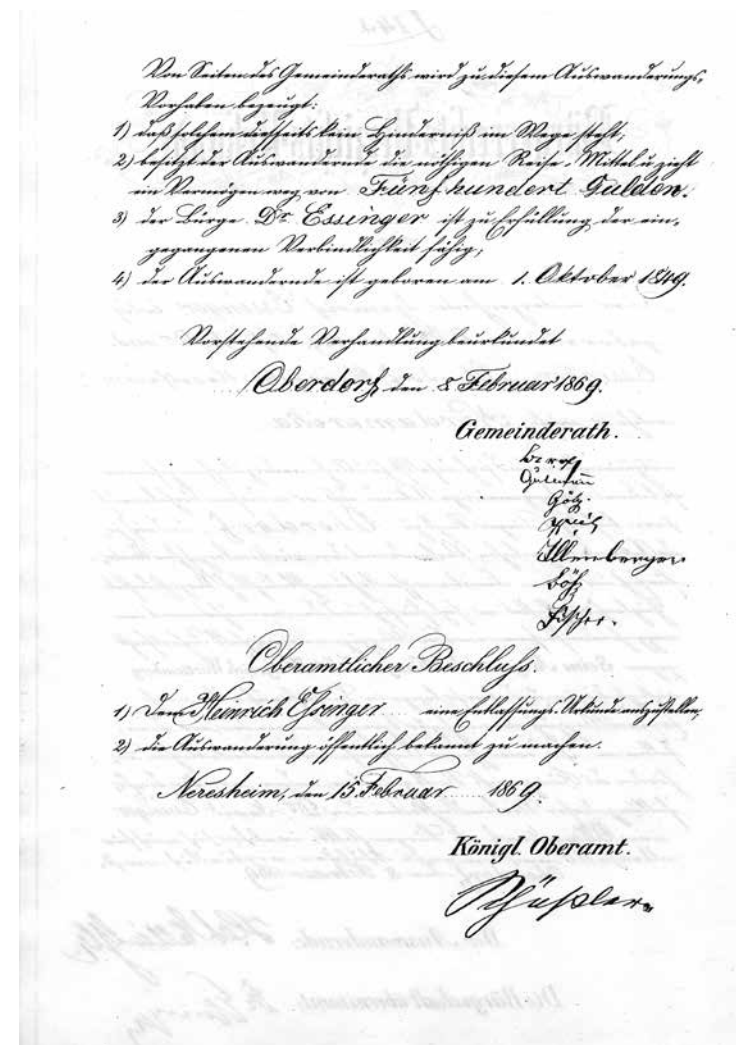
From Aufhausen, Bopfingen and Oberdorf, 37 Jews served in the war, five of whom were killed.

1930

The Oberdorf Rabbinate was merged with the Rabbinate in Schwäbisch Hall.



27/28. The precondition for emigration was the renunciation of citizenship: The renunciation of citizenship certificate of Heinrich Essinger, Neresheim 1869



# Organization of the Jewish community

A well-functioning Jewish community includes various offices and facilities, which have been precisely laid down since ancient times. Whereas the community is represented in a legal sense by the community elders, the rabbi is a community worker with the tasks of teacher, preacher and judge.

Probably since the Thirty Years' War, and certainly after 1731, Oberdorf belonged to the Oettingen rural rabbinate of Wallerstein.

Initially Oberdorf only had a so-called "substitute rabbi". Not until the Württemberg period, from 1830, did Oberdorf have its own rabbi, who, from 1832, was also the district rabbi for the Württemberg rural rabbinate No. 8, with 1140 members in Oberdorf, Aufhausen, Pflaumloch and Lauchheim. Later the Jews in Ellwangen, Schwäbisch Gmünd and Schorndorf also belonged to the Oberdorf rabbinate, which continued in existence until 1930, when it became part of the rabbinate in Schwäbisch Hall.

## Rabbis in Oberdorf

1830 – 1834	<b>Moses Bloch</b>
1835 – 1859	<b>Gabriel Adler</b>
1860	<b>Menco Berlinger</b>
1861 – 1884	<b>Jakob Oberdorfer</b>
1887 – 1894	<b>Dr. Samuel Grün</b>
1895 – 1897	<b>Jesaia Strassburger,</b> Administrator
1897 – 1930	<b>Dr. Hermann Kroner</b>

## The school

The "Law regarding the public relationships of the Israelite community", dated 25 April

1828, specified compulsory education for Jewish children from the age of 6 to 14. The Jewish community in Oberdorf had already been running its own school since 5 March 1823, which was housed on the top floor above the women's bath (mikveh).

The number of pupils reflected the size of the Jewish community over the years:

Year	Number of pupils
1835	108 pupils
1836	112 pupils
1837	114 pupils
1838	113 pupils
1840	108 pupils
1844	98 pupils
1847	115 pupils
1848	114 pupils
1850	113 pupils
1880	63 pupils
1900	20 pupils
1903	27 pupils
1905	28 pupils

The teacher's salary was initially paid by the Jewish community, but following the law of 1836 this fell to the town council. Besides the usual subjects, special importance was attached to learning Hebrew and to religious instruction. In 1924 the Jewish school closed due to lack of pupils. The statutory minimum number of pupils for a public school was no longer attained. Thereafter Jewish children attended the Protestant primary school.

The teachers were: Rosenthaler, Maison, Marx and lastly Siegfried Erlebacher.

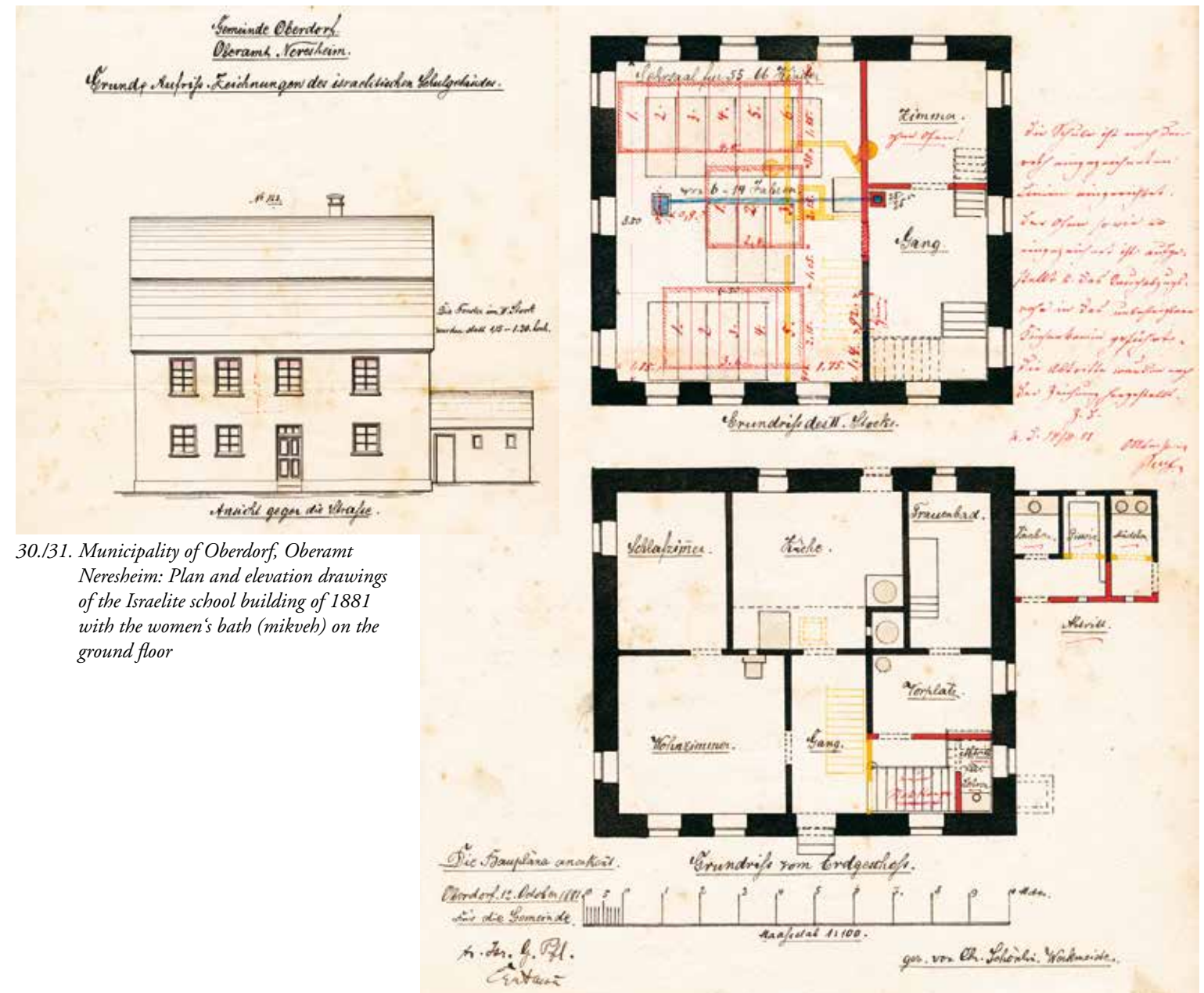
## The ritual bath (mikveh)

According to the Talmud, a women's bath is mandatory for a Jewish community. Bathing there is prescribed after menstruation, before the wedding night, after childbirth, and after contact with a corpse.

In Oberdorf it is assumed that there was a mikveh, at least as from the time when the Jewish community was established. There is evidence of a house, built in 1823, in which the mikveh was accommodated in two rooms on the ground floor, with the school on the floor above. The plan of the house still shows the steps into the pool.



29. Teacher Erlebacher with pupils



30./31. Municipality of Oberdorf, Oberamt Neresheim: Plan and elevation drawings of the Israelite school building of 1881 with the women's bath (mikveh) on the ground floor

# House of eternity: The Jewish cemetery

Building a cemetery is a religious duty for a Jewish community and important regulations must be complied with: the ground must be at least 50 ells outside the village, be surrounded by a stone wall with two gates, and have a building for the funeral preparations. The cemetery must be planned to last for eternity. Graves are allocated only once and the deceased await here for their bodily resurrection.

A Jewish cemetery satisfying these requirements was planned in Oberdorf in 1824. Prior to that Oberdorf Jews buried their dead in the ancient cemetery in Wallerstein. However, in 1810 Wallerstein became part of Bavaria, and thus the Oberdorf Jews now needed their own cemetery.

1824

The Jewish community acquired a piece of land in the Karkstein road and built a cemetery on part of it.

1903

It became necessary to enlarge the cemetery. The Jewish community in Oberdorf applied to the Oberamt in Neresheim for permission to enlarge the cemetery by about 29 ares; the application was approved in 1904.

1942

There were no longer any Jews living in Oberdorf. The last burials – at what is today the western edge of the cemetery – were in 1947 and 1948. These are the graves of Polish Jews who died as “displaced persons” in Wasserafingen, where some of them had worked during the war as forced laborers.

1952

The cemetery was reduced to the size it is today and the cemetery building demolished.

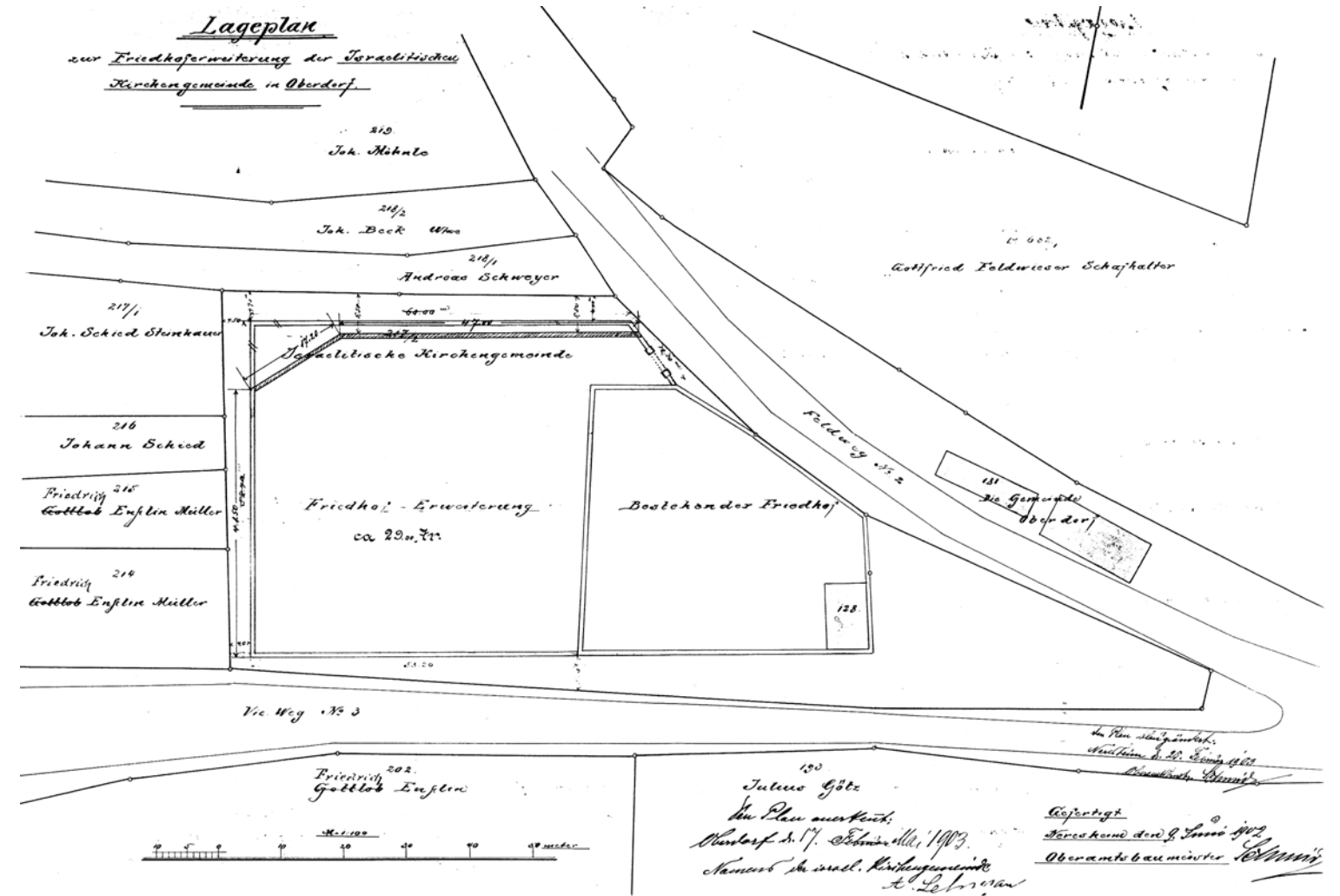
The rest of the land to the west was sold off and later built on.

From 1994

Today 469 tombstones are preserved in the Jewish cemetery. The older ones, made of sandstone with rich decoration and inscriptions, are increasingly suffering from erosion. The “Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf” has decided at least to document what is there. Funded by donations, a full inventory of the cemetery will be made.



32. – 35. Photos of the Jewish cemetery in Oberdorf. Photos Hildebrand.



36. Drawing for the extension of the cemetery of the Israelite community in Oberdorf from 1903

# The Jewish population

Development of the Jewish population in Oberdorf can be divided into three phases: from the beginnings until around the year 1700, four to six Jewish families on average lived in Oberdorf.

At the time the community was founded, around 1710, the number of Jews in Oberdorf abruptly increased to about 130 persons (documented for the first time in 1723). Until the mid-19th century there was continuous development of the population, achieving a peak in 1838 with 545 Jewish inhabitants. At that time there were, in total, only 1284 persons living in Oberdorf.

The freedom of settlement formulated in 1849 in the fundamental rights of the German nation had a dramatic effect on the size of the Jewish community in Oberdorf. Due to migration and emigration – 86 Jews from Oberdorf alone emigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1872, and many others moved to cities in Germany - the number of the Oberdorf Jews had already dwindled to 351 persons by 1871. In 1933 there were only 87 Jews living in Oberdorf.

The same sort of development applies to the range of professions practiced by Jews.

## Occupations of the Oberdorf Jews

Occupation	19th c.	20th c.
Worker		2
Doctor	1	
Baker	6	
Banker	2	
Bookbinder	1	
Confectioner	1	
Turner	1	
Own goods dealer	1	

Occupation	19th c.	20th c.
Ironmonger	1	
Manufacturer	3	1
Carter	1	
Gardner		1
Tradesman	56	1
Tradesman, butcher	1	
Laborer		1
Hat maker	1	
Businessman	29	10
Churchwarden	1	
Farmer	2	
Teacher	2	1
Glue manufacturer	1	
Liqueur producer	1	
Rag-and-bone man	2	
Matzah master baker	1	
Butcher	18	
Butcher, cattle dealer	1	1
no occupation	14	
Economist	1	
Horse trader	1	
Rabbi	3	
Legal counselor	1	
Scroll writer	1	
Tanner	1	
Apprentice locksmith		1
Blacksmith	1	
Taylor	1	
Carpenter	1	
Shoemaker	2	
Schoolteacher	4	
Cobbler	2	
Saddler	1	
Ropemaker	1	
Clothmaker	2	
Clockmaker	2	
Cattle dealer	13	19
Weaver, tradesman	1	
Master weaver	1	
Publican	2	
Brickworks owner	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>39</b>

In the 19th century all the professions were represented in the Oberdorf Jewry that are required for a functioning Jewish community. Apart from many craftsmen, the main focus was on trade. The tradition of cattle traders in Oberdorf was already clearly emerging. In the 20th century, however, primarily only those occupational groups remain for whom relocation or emigration was impractical. With 19 cattle traders Oberdorf is still today the main transfer site for cattle trading in the region.

In the 20th century women were recorded as employed persons for the first time. Thirty Jewish women gave their occupation on their notice of departure as follows:

Employee	1
Wife/Housewife	15
Domestic servant	1
House maid	10
Apprentice	1
Shop assistant	2

**Oberdorf.**  
**Auswanderung.**

Heium Gutmann, Handelsmann da hier, beabsichtigt mit seiner Familie nach Amerika auszuwandern, will aber die verfassungsmäßige Bürgerschaft nicht leisten; es werden daher alle diejenigen, welche an denselben oder seine Ehefrau Forderungs- und sonstige Ansprüche zu machen haben, hiemit aufgefordert, solche binnen 15 Tagen von heute an, bei der unterzeichneten Stelle anzumelden und nachzuweisen, weil nach Umfluß dieser Zeit, wenn keine besondere Anstände mehr zu beseitigen sind, der Auswanderung Statt gegeben wird.

Den 29. März 1853.  
**Schultheißenamt.**  
Berg.

**Bopfingen.**  
**Nach Newyork, Neworleans u. Baltimore**

sowie nach allen andern Orten Amerika's jede Woche die billigste und sicherste Gelegenheit pr. Dampf- und Segelschiffe bei

**Louis Gahn,**  
Agentur der längst allgemein bekannten, concessionirten und mit fl. 10,000 Caution gesicherten Beförderung-Anstalt des res. Notars C. Stäblein in Heilbronn a.N.

**Bopfingen.**  
**Sichere Reisegelegenheit nach Amerika.**

Der Unterzeichnete, welcher kürzlich von Amerika hier angekommen ist, wird Anfangs nächsten Monats wieder dahin abreisen.

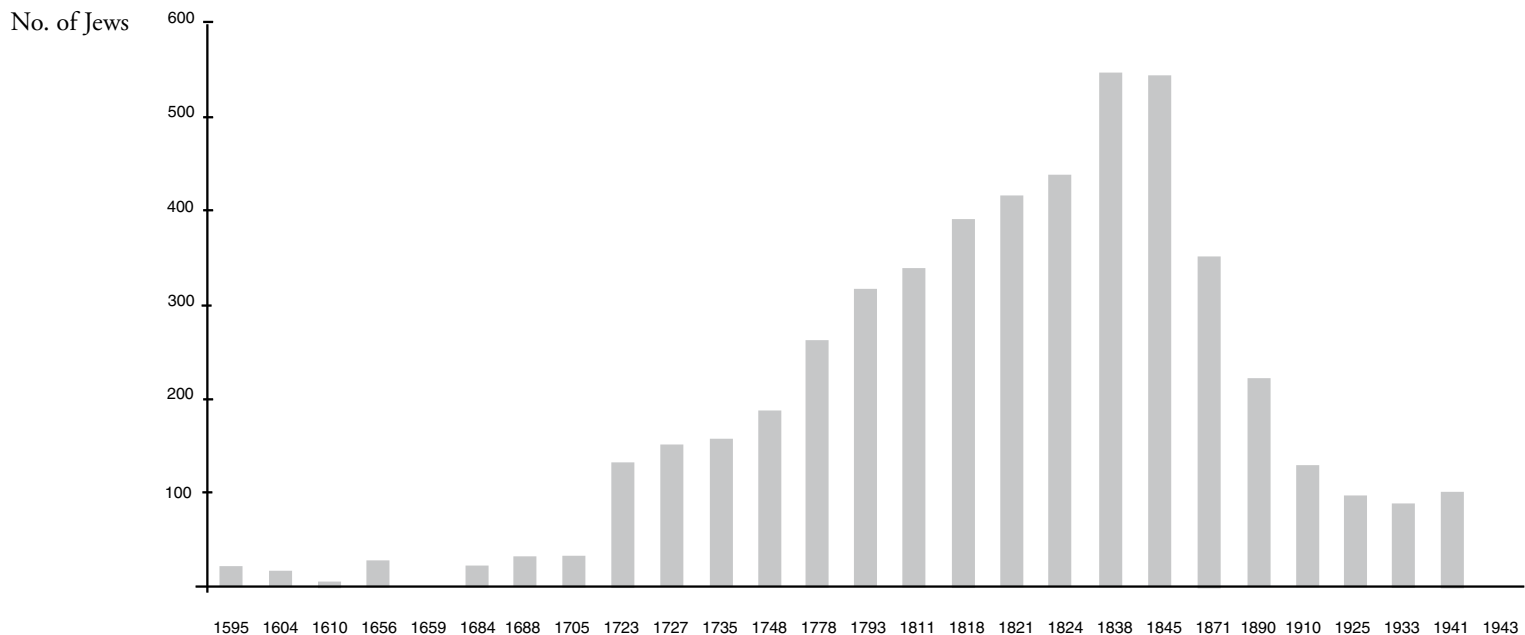
Wer von meinen Landsleuten gewonnen ist, sich dieser Fahrt mit anzuschließen, und von meinen gemachten Erfahrungen unterrichtet werden will, den ersuche ich, in Balde sich mit mir in Correspondenz zu setzen.

**Jakob Schmid.**

Belegt und redigirt von Th. Wölfl in Heilbronn.

37.138. Notices about emigration to America from the newspaper

## Development of the Jewish population in Oberdorf



40. Population development

1936

**Wohnungs-Abmeldung (Wegziehender).**

Am 17. April 1936 wird von dem Vorderhaus Nr. 12 de. Straße 12 in Oberdorf nach New York nach (Mittlerer Name und Wohnort, soweit möglich nach Angabe der Wohnung) wegziehen:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Familienname, bei Frauen auch die früheren Namen	Fürliche Vornamen (bei Frauen auch die unterstehenden)	ob leiblich, verwelbt, verwidwet, geschieden oder getrennt lebend	a) Beruf b) Berufsbildung (selbstständig oder Wehrdienst)	Geburtsort	Geburtszeit	Staatsangehörigkeit	Standverhältnis	Wohnung am Ort der letzten Wohnstätte (Küche- und Betriebsaufgabe?)	ob eigene Wohnung oder bei wem in Unterwelt, Schenkung, Dienst oder zu Besuch?
Bernheimer	Flora	Leiblich	Lehrerin	9. 2. 1892	Oberdorf	Preussisch	verheiratet	Oberdorf	W. 12
Mitwirkende Familienmitglieder (nur Ehefrau und Kinder):									

Oberdorf, den 17. April 1936.  
(unabhängige Unterschrift der Mitwirkenden)  
Wohnungsgeber: Flora Bernheimer  
Wohnungsgeber:

\*) Falls eine Personenkarte und Betriebsaufnahme im letzten Jahr nicht vorzulegen ist, ist Stellung der letzten angangenen 10. Oktober.

Verf. Nr. 158. Wohnungsabmeldung (Wegziehender) (Verf. C zu §§ 4 und 7 WEGG.). 000

39. Notice of departure of Flora Bernheimer to New York in 1936

“The generally very hard-working inhabitants make their living from crop cultivation, cattle rearing, trades and crafts, and day work; while the busy Israelites, except for one with a large farm and a few tradesmen, mainly earn their living by trading in cattle, metal, down, rags, etc.”

In this description by the Oberamt Neresheim in 1872, there are several mentions of the tradition of cattle dealing in Oberdorf, which has its roots in the 18th century. From Oberdorf the Jewish cattle dealers traveled throughout the surrounding area and further afield, and became indispensable to the region’s cattle markets. From their beginnings as “Schmusjuden”, acting as a kind of broker between individual farmers, cattle dealing developed on a grand scale in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The new railway line from Bopfingen to Stuttgart (1862) gave an added boost to the trade, with Jewish cattle dealers now able to supply the Stuttgart abattoir from Oberdorf. In Oberdorf, the amount of tax revenue from cattle dealers was so high that when their trading licenses were revoked in 1939 the town faced major financial difficulties.

Another focus in trade was on textiles. Especially noteworthy was the Heimann brothers’ factory, which was a wholesaler for woven goods and knitwear, and produced working clothes and linen goods. Besides the parent company in Oberdorf, founded in 1832, the company had a branch in Stuttgart on the Königsstrasse in the early 20th century. In Oberdorf, many seamstresses worked from home for the company.

The largest employer in Oberdorf was the “Leim-, Collagen und Dégras-Werke Veit

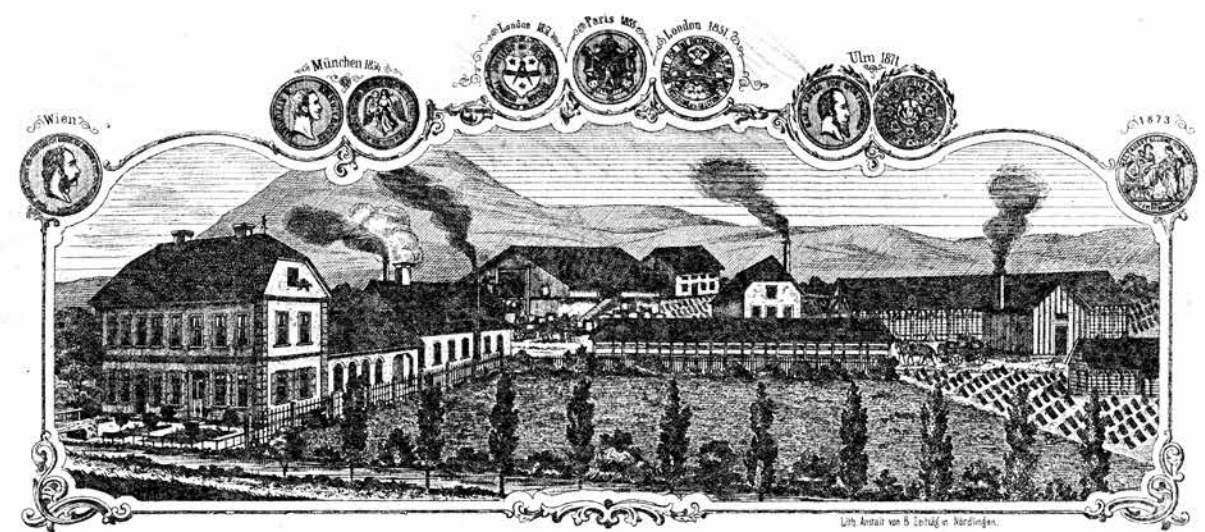
Weil”, a manufacturer of glue, collagen and degreas, founded in 1830. The Oberamt Neresheim described it in 1872 as follows:

“... we also mention the glue, gelatin and fertilizer factory of Veit Weil, which employs 36 persons and sells annually about 1500 hundredweight of glue, 15000 hundredweight of fertilizer, 1000 hundredweight of bone fat and small quantities of gelatine throughout Germany, France and America; ...”

Oberdorf.  
(G e s c h ä f t s - A n z e i g e.)  
Nachdem ich längere Zeit das Kleidermachen bei der ersten Kleidermacherin Stuttgarts erlernte, werde ich dieses Geschäft nun hier in meinem Geburtsorte betreiben und empfehle mich zu gereigten Aufträgen im Verfertigen von allen Arten Damenkleider, Mäntel, Korsetts, Mantillen, Schemisetten u. s. w. mit dem Bemerken, daß stets die neuesten pariser Modes-Journale bei mir zur Ansicht bereit liegen, um jeder Anforderung aufs Beste Genüge leisten zu können.  
Lina Schwabacher.

**H. L. Heimann, Oberdorf bei Bopfingen**  
Für Elf und Dierzehn Mark  
Liefere ich 40 Meter oder 65 Ellen guten, waschechten Hemdenzeug.  
Sämtliche andere Artikel, besonders  
**Bettzeuge, Rock- & Blusenstoffe, Damen- & Herren-Kleiderstoffe** zu äußerst billigen, aber festen Preisen.  
Größte Auswahl in soliden Qualitäten. Muster nach auswärts zu Diensten.  
**H. L. Heimann, Oberdorf bei Bopfingen.**

41. – 44. Advertisements from the “Bote vom Härtsfeld” newspaper



45. Letterhead of the Veit Weil company

Von Freitag, den 17. ds. Mts. an steht ein großer Transport erstklassiger  
**Rot- und Gelbschедiger Jungrinder u. =Stiere**  
in unseren Stallungen.  
Kaufliebhaber laden höfl. ein  
**Gebr. Meyer Oberdorf-Bopfingen.**  
Telefon Amt Bopfingen Nr. 32.

In unseren Stallungen stehen  
**schöne, trächttige, gewöhnte Kühe**  
und auch solche mit Kälbern, sowie ein großer Transport bestes  
**Simmenthaler Jungvieh.**  
Kaufliebhaber laden höfl. ein  
**Gebr. Neumetzger Oberdorf-Bopfingen.**  
Fernsprecher Nr. 47.

# Oberdorf personalities

## Dr. Hermann Kroner, rabbi

(born in 1870 in Münster/Westphalia, died in 1930 in Oberdorf) studied at the theological seminary in Breslau, and at Marburg and Heidelberg universities. He earned his doctorate in 1898 from Tübingen for his thesis entitled, "Maimonides' Commentary on the Bezah Treatise. Published for the first time in the original Arabic, with improved Hebrew translations and annotations."

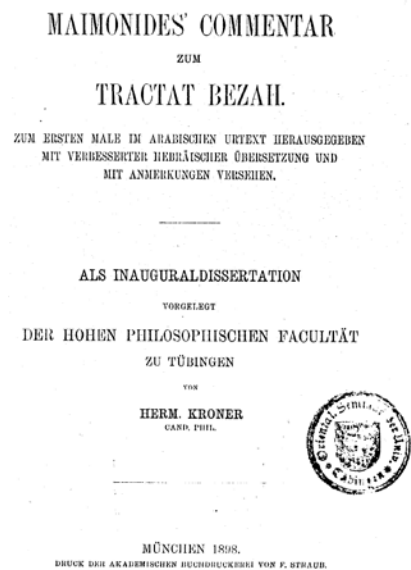
This and other scientific work on the same subject singled him out as an eminent Maimonides scholar. Rabbi Kroner held office from 1897 to 1930. On the occasion of his 60th birthday, on 21 March 1930, the town council sent him a congratulatory letter:

"The Town Council and with us the whole Oberdorf community wish to join with you in celebrating your 60th birthday. We do this with great sincerity. You have always promoted our interests whenever possible. For this we owe you our heartfelt thanks."

Dr. Kroner died, completely unexpectedly, on 30 July 1930. The Town Council took part in his funeral which was held at midday on 1 August 1930.



46. Rabbi Kroner with schoolchildren from Stuttgart



47. Title page of Hermann Kroner's doctoral thesis, Munich 1898

48. Hermann Kroner, Contribution to the History of Medicine in the 12th Century



## Karl Weil

(1879 – 1935), manufacturer, commercial counselor and freeman of Oberdorf, was one of the most noteworthy figures of his home town. He was the owner of the Veit Weil, glue, collagen and degreas factory. The company was founded in 1830 by Veit Weil, then passed on to his son, Michael Weil, and in 1894 to his grandson.

Karl Weil was a member of the town council from 1903. On the occasion of his 50th birthday, on 18 June 1921, the town council made him an honorary citizen, "in recognition of his many services to the town in the fields of public welfare and charity."

This title was taken away from him by the Nazis in 1933. Today a street in Oberdorf is named after him. Of Karl Weil's many gifts to Oberdorf, one may be singled out here for special mention: On 13 February 1919, the Veit Weil company donated 6000 marks to the town. The interest on this capital sum was intended first for the employees and then for the needy inhabitants of the town.

Karl Weil is buried in a family grave in the Jewish cemetery in Oberdorf.



49. Karl Weil



50. Honorary citizen certificate for Karl Weil, Oberdorf, dated 18 June 1921

# German Jews in World War I

“Oberdorf Jews thought of themselves first and foremost as Germans, and only secondly as Jews.”

Karl Heiman

Legal integration of Jews in Württemberg was completed with the passing of the last of the equality laws in 1864. The following figures give an indication of how far their integration into society had progressed:

In World War I, Jews from Oberdorf served as soldiers as a matter of course. They were among the 10,824 Jewish “citizens of the German Reich” in Württemberg and Hohenzollern, of whom 1674 served as front-line soldiers, 270 of whom were killed.

Of the 37 Jewish soldiers from Aufhausen, Bopfingen and Oberdorf, five lost their lives.

Five sons of the Heimann family served in the war.

51. – 55. Military passport of David Heimann and medals won by the Heimann sons. Bequeathed to the Archive of the Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf by Karl Heiman



Nationale des Buchinhabers.

1. Vor- und Familienname: David Heimann

Geboren am 6. ten Febr. 1879 zu Oberdorf

Oberamt: Trossingen

Bundesstaat: Württemberg

2. Stand oder Gewerbe: Kaufmann

3. Religion: israel.

4. Ob verheiratet: nein ja

Kinder: keine 2 todt.

5. Datum und Art des Dienst Eintritts: Am 1. 7. 1915 als Rekrut. Ersatz-Reservist. unausgebildeter Landsturmpflichtiger.

6. Bei welchem Truppenteil: 2. Kompagnie Ers. Batl. Ldw. J. B. 120.



56. The five sons of the Heimann family who fought at the front, compiled by David Heimann 1933



# The Third Reich

*"We do not want to be emotional anti-Semites but, inspired by a relentless determination, to attack the evil at its source and exterminate it root and branch."*

Adolf Hitler, 1920

This early declaration by Hitler was eagerly adopted by the Nazi Party after they seized power in 1933. Anti-Semitism became the state ideology and persecution of the Jews the declared policy of the government. Through some 2000 laws and regulations, German Jews were systematically ousted from economic, social and cultural life.

First, Jews were "removed" from public office. Further professional bans followed, among them for doctors, lawyers and pharmacists. Jewish students were prevented from taking exams; Jews were excluded from military service. With the "Reich Citizenship Laws" (Nuremberg Laws) of 1935, Jews were then denied their civil rights.

*"The implementation regulations for the Nuremberg Laws defined with perfidious attention to detail who had to be classified as of German blood, Jew, Grade 1 persons of mixed descent or Grade 2 persons of mixed descent."*

(Translated from the "Neues jüdisches Lexikon")

Further laws and regulations ensured the final isolation of Jews in society, for example the ban on employing non-Jewish domestic workers under 45 years of age, and bans on going to the theater, cinemas or public swimming pools.

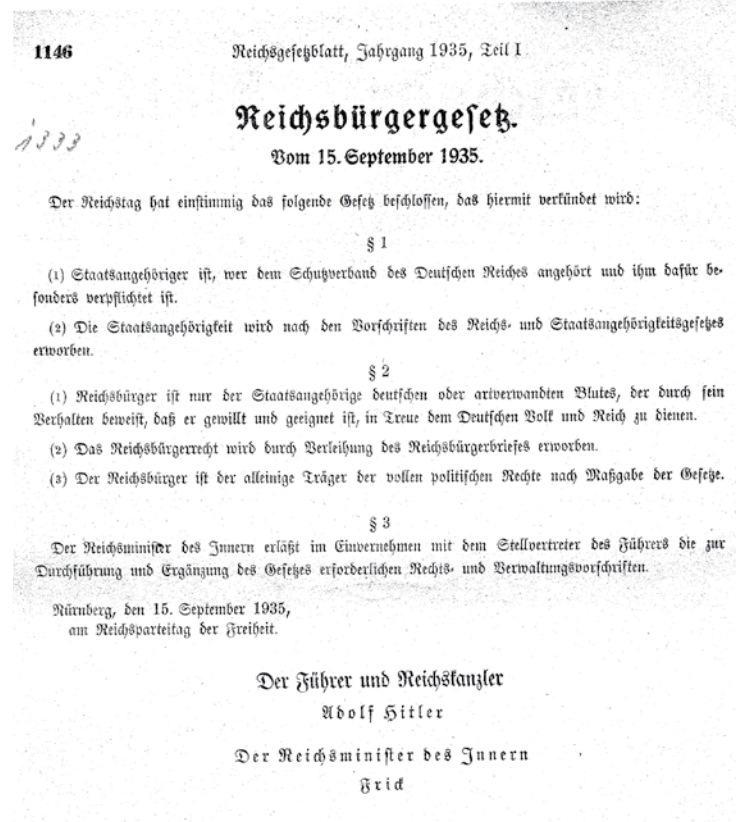
Jews had to have a special identity card and take either Sarah or Israel as their first name. The many outrages against Jewish citizens cul-

minated in the so-called "Kristallnacht", meticulously organized by the Nazis, in which synagogues all over Germany were set on fire and Jewish shops looted. This was followed by "the elimination of Jews from the economic system": Jewish businesses were forcibly "Arianized", and Jewish property confiscated.

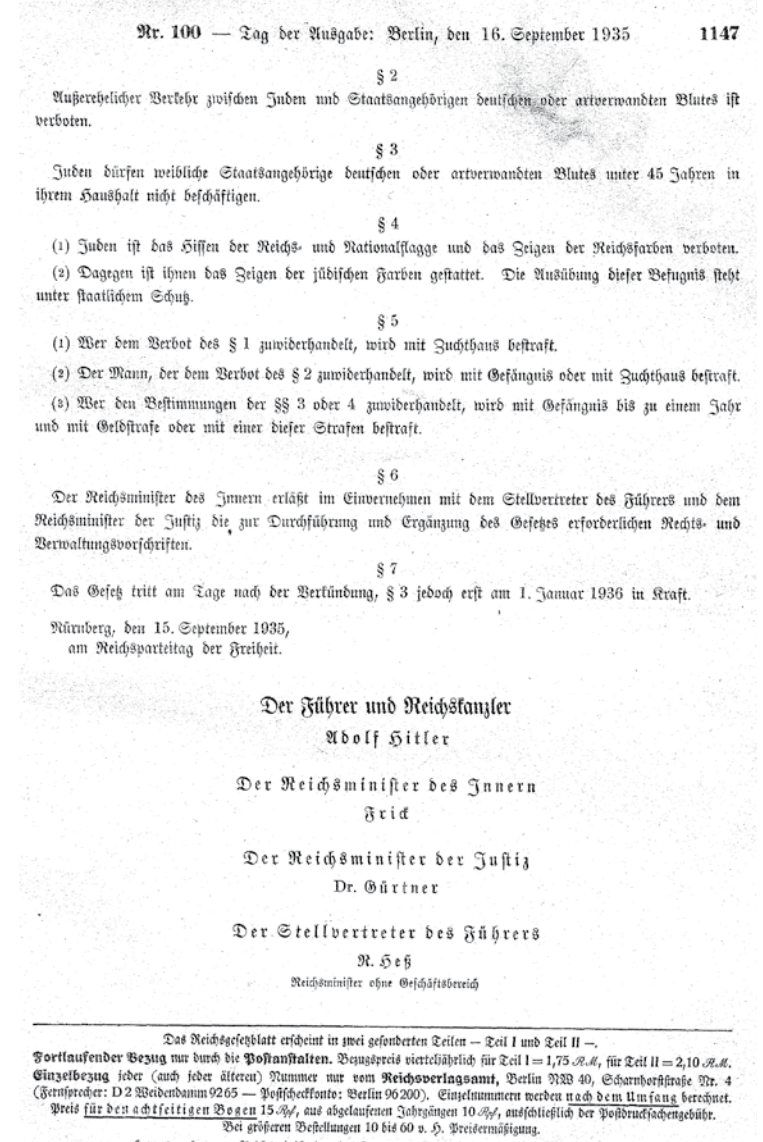
The last, terrible step was the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" devised at the Wannsee Conference. The first deportations to the extermination camps began in 1940.

At least 5.2 million European Jews became victims of this extermination machine, organized down to the last detail by the Nazi regime.

57./58. Passport and identity card of the Heimmann family



59./60. Reichsgesetzblatt 1935, Part I, pages 1146/1147. Date of issue: 16 September 1935



**1930**  
September: Reichstag election. Nazi Party in Oberdorf: 31.4 %

**1931**  
February: A local branch of the Nazi Party is established in Oberdorf with the teacher Dreher as its leader.

**1931**  
Summer: A local branch of the Communist Party is established in Oberdorf.

**1932**  
November: Reichstag election. Nazi Party in Oberdorf: 38.66 % (for comparison, in Württemberg the Nazi Party got 26.24 %).

**1933**  
87 Jewish inhabitants living in Oberdorf (compared to 934 Christians).

**1933**  
Start of emigration.

**1933**  
End of the year: David Heimann is taken into “protective custody” in the local prison because of communist activities; Max Heimann because of disrespectful remarks about Adolf Hitler.

**1933**  
Three Jews manage to emigrate from Oberdorf.

**1934**  
One Jew succeeds in emigrating from Oberdorf.

**1935**  
Six Jews manage to emigrate from Oberdorf.

**1936**  
Two Jews manage to emigrate from Oberdorf.

**1938**  
1st October: Occupational ban imposed on Jewish cattle dealers in Oberdorf.

**1938**  
Three Jews manage to emigrate from Oberdorf.

**1938**  
9/10 November: Kristallnacht

**1939**  
From 1939 to 1941, 54 Jews were interned in Oberdorf. They mainly came from the greater Stuttgart area, but also from Bopfingen, and lived in Oberdorf under appalling conditions. They were billeted on six Jewish households in Oberdorf:

Haupt Strasse 148	2 persons
Haupt Strasse 75	5 persons
Langen Gasse 20	5 persons
Haupt Strasse 77	8 persons
Rosch Gasse 97	8 persons
Langen Gasse 24	24 persons

**1939**  
Eleven Jews manage to emigrate from Oberdorf.

**1941**  
Start of deportations from Oberdorf:

**1st December 1941**  
24 Jews from Oberdorf are deported to Riga (13 of them were locals, 11 were internees). Of those deported only one person, Meta Meyer, is known to have survived.

**1941**  
For the last time five Jews manage to emigrate from Oberdorf. (Up to 1941, 58 Jews managed to emigrate.)

**20 January 1942**  
Wannsee Conference. At a conference of the secretaries of state, with Heydrich as Chairman, the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” is drawn up.

**26 April 1942**  
19 Jews from Oberdorf are deported to Izbica (9 locals, 10 internees). None are known to have survived.

**13 July 1942**  
Four Jews from Oberdorf are deported to Auschwitz; prior to this, all have been interned in Oberdorf.

**22 August 1942**  
Last deportation train. 41 Jews from Oberdorf are deported to “the hell of Theresienstadt” (12 locals, 29 internees).  
On its way to Stuttgart the train (which left Bopfingen at 10:03 a.m.) picks up further Jews in Lauchheim and Schwäbisch Gmünd.

**Thus in total 88 people were deported from Oberdorf. After that in Nazi terminology Oberdorf was declared “free of Jews”.**



61. From 1 to 3 April 1933, the first boycott of Jewish shops was organized throughout the country. In Oberdorf the Heimann family’s drapery shop was targeted. The texts on the two signs read: **“The Jews are our misfortune”** and **“A German does not buy from Jews”**

## Protective custody

Registrier-Akten  
der Gemeinde Oberdorf am Jpf.  
An das Aktenbünd Nr. 5422, Beleg Nr. 14

Württ. Landespolizeiamt  
Stuttgart.

*Jude!*

Der frühere Schutzhäftling Heinrich Heimann, lediger Kaufmann, geboren am 4. Dezember 1910 zu Oberdorf am Jpf beabsichtigt nach Palästina auszuwandern. Heimann ist am 9. April 1934 nach Stuttgart, Königstrasse 1 verzogen und bin ich für die Ausstellung des Leumundszeugnisses vor dem 9. April 1934 für die Zeit vor dem 9. April 1934 zuständig.

Jch bitte um Mitteilung, ob dort gegen die Auswanderung Bedenken bestehen und ob das politische Führungszeugnis ausgestellt werden kann.

Oberdorf am Jpf, den 17. Mai 1934.

Bürgermeisteramt.  
Nr. Ic 21/36.

An das  
Bürgermeisteramt  
Oberdorf am Jpf.

unter Bezugnahme auf das in Abschrift angeschlossene Ermittlungsergebnis zurückgesandt.

Gegen die Ausstellung eines politischen Führungszeugnisses wird von hier aus nichts eingewendet, wenn dieses ausdrücklich nur für Auswanderungszwecke ausgestellt und Gewähr dafür geboten ist, dass Heimann tatsächlich in kürzester Zeit auswandert.

Stuttgart, den 9. Juli 1934.  
Württ. Polit. Landespolizeiamt.  
Im Auftrag  
Regierungsrat

1 Beil.

19 MAI 1934  
IC 21/36

62.163. Correspondence regarding the emigration of Heinrich Heimann

## Occupational ban

Württ. Polit. Landespolizeiamt.  
Stuttgart, den 6. Juni 1934.

Die angestellten Erhebungen nach den hier vorhandenen Akten haben ergeben, dass der vorseits näher genannte

Heinrich Heimann, geb. 4.12.1910  
in Oberdorf am Jpf, wohnhaft Stuttgart, Königstr. 1.  
ein Müsserat rühriger Werber für die Rote Hilfe und die KPD. war. Aus diesem Grunde war er vom 21.4.33 bis 13.6.33 im Amtsgerichtsgefängnis Heeresheim in Schutzhaft.

Aus einem Brief des Ortsgruppenleiters Karl Dreher von Oberdorf a/Jpf geht eindeutig hervor, dass derselbe den Heimann in politischer Hinsicht nicht für zuverlässig hält.

In vielen Gesuchen der Eltern um Freilassung ihres Sohnes aus der Schutzhaft betonen sie plötzlich ihre nationale Gesinnung. Es wurde auch ein Bild beigelegt von 5 Söhnen der Familie Heimann, die alle 5 den Weltkrieg mitgemacht haben. Wie aus dem Schreiben des Ortsgruppenleiters weiter hervorgeht, hat die Familie Heimann jedoch früher mit der KPD. sympathisiert.

Polizeibeamter

In 1938 the Jewish cattle dealers had their trading licenses revoked. How much this ultimately harmed the economic welfare of the town is revealed by the minutes of the council meeting of 17 December 1937:

*"Since the real estate register of the Jews is diminishing from year to year and furthermore the Cattle Trading Association in Stuttgart has filed an application with the State Farming Authority to revoke the Jewish cattle dealers' licenses, the town can expect a very significant decrease in its trade tax revenue."*

The concerns of the council became reality on 1 October 1938, when the Jewish cattle dealers' licenses were indeed revoked. To make up for the loss of Jewish taxes, the municipal trade tax in fiscal year 1938 had to be increased to 400 %.

64. Dissolution of the Jewish religious community

## Compulsory liquidation

Registrier-Akten  
der Gemeinde Oberdorf am Jpf.  
Aktenbünd Nr. 5422, Beleg Nr. 14  
24.8.1939.

den  
Herrn Landrat  
in Aalen.

Betreff: Auflösung jüdischer Religionsgemeinschaften.  
Beil.: 0.

Die beabsichtigte Auflösung der jüdischen Religionsgemeinschaft in Oberdorf am Jpf durch den Oberrat der Jsr. Religionsgemeinschaft Württembergs wird von hier aus begrüsst und steht durchaus nichts im Wege.

Wenn das vorhandene Vermögen der hiesigen jüdischen Religionsgemeinschaft der Jüdische Oberrat an sich zieht u. hiesige Juden hilfsbedürftig sind u. noch mehr werden sollten, so müssen sie doch laut Verordnung über die öffentliche Fürsorge für Juden vom 19.11.1938, Reg.Bl.I S.1649, soweit die Mittel ausreichen, von der jüdischen freien Wohlfahrtspflege betreut werden, was ja bei den hiesigen Juden z.Tl. schon geschieht. Aus diesem Grunde ist es einerlei wer das Vermögen bekommt, weil es letzten Endes doch wieder der jüdischen öffentlichen Fürsorge zufließt. Vermögen besitzt die jüd. Kultusgemeinde hier ca. 6000 RM dazu noch ca. 4000 RM Stiftungen.

Die Gemeinde Oberdorf am Jpf hat die jüdischen öffentlichen Gebäude gekauft um den Kaufpreis von 4500 RM. Der Kauf ist aber noch nicht genehmigt. Dieses Geld ist bei dem obenangeführten Vermögen nicht inbegriffen u. soll lt. Kaufvertrag auf ein Sonderkonto angelegt werden u. nur für ortsansässige hilfsbedürftige Juden verwendet werden. Dies wird m.E. auch bei einer evtl. Vermögensübernahme durch den Oberrat unberührt bleiben.

Der Bürgermeister.  
1. Beigeordneter:

Der Bürgermeister.  
1. Beigeordneter:

# Murder

# Emigration

Julius Schuster and his son Josef were “picked up” following Kristallnacht. Later the investigation into the murder of Josef Schuster by the Denazification Court, Aalen, found:

“The Jew Schuster and his son were picked up by SA Adjutant Roos of Gmünd on the morning of 9 November 1938 (...), accompanied by another SA officer and driven in the direction of Utzmemmingen by car. There the Schusters were made to get out of the car and run across a field. Both SA officers opened fire. Schuster Jr. was shot dead, and Schuster Sr. wounded.”

In the register of deaths for Utzmemmingen in 1953, it is recorded that “Schuster, Sepp” died within the boundaries of the town in 1938.

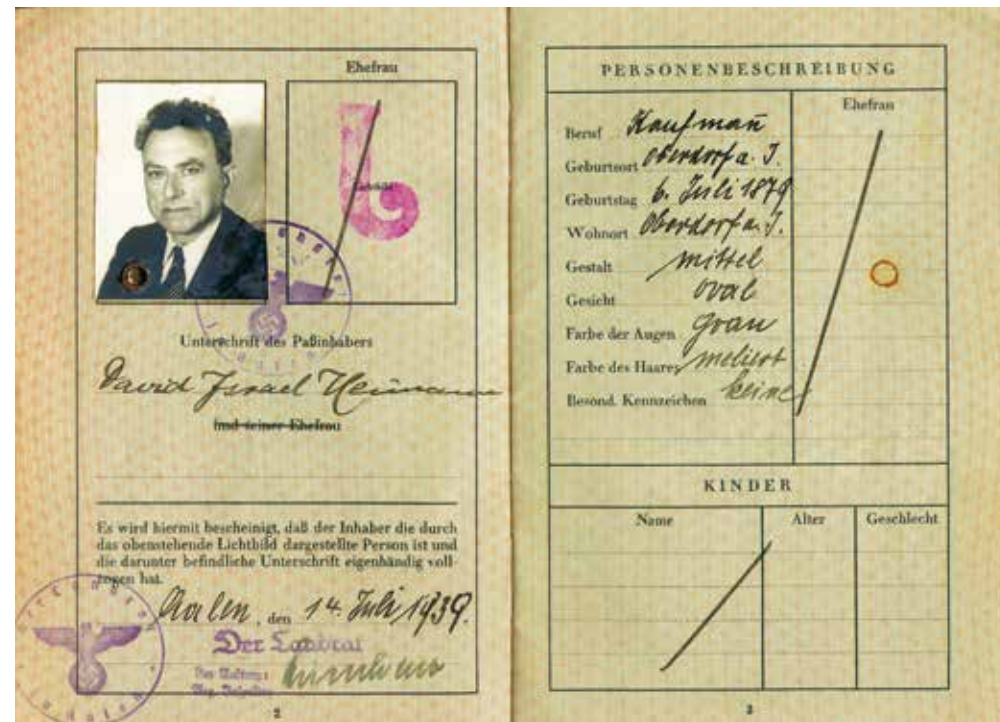
“When our family was finally able to emigrate to the United States of America in August 1939, the Heimann Torah accompanied us. We disembarked in New York on 17 August 1939, exactly two weeks before Hitler invaded Poland, thus igniting World War II.

That day, 17 August 1939, happened to also be the 30th wedding anniversary of our parents, Da-

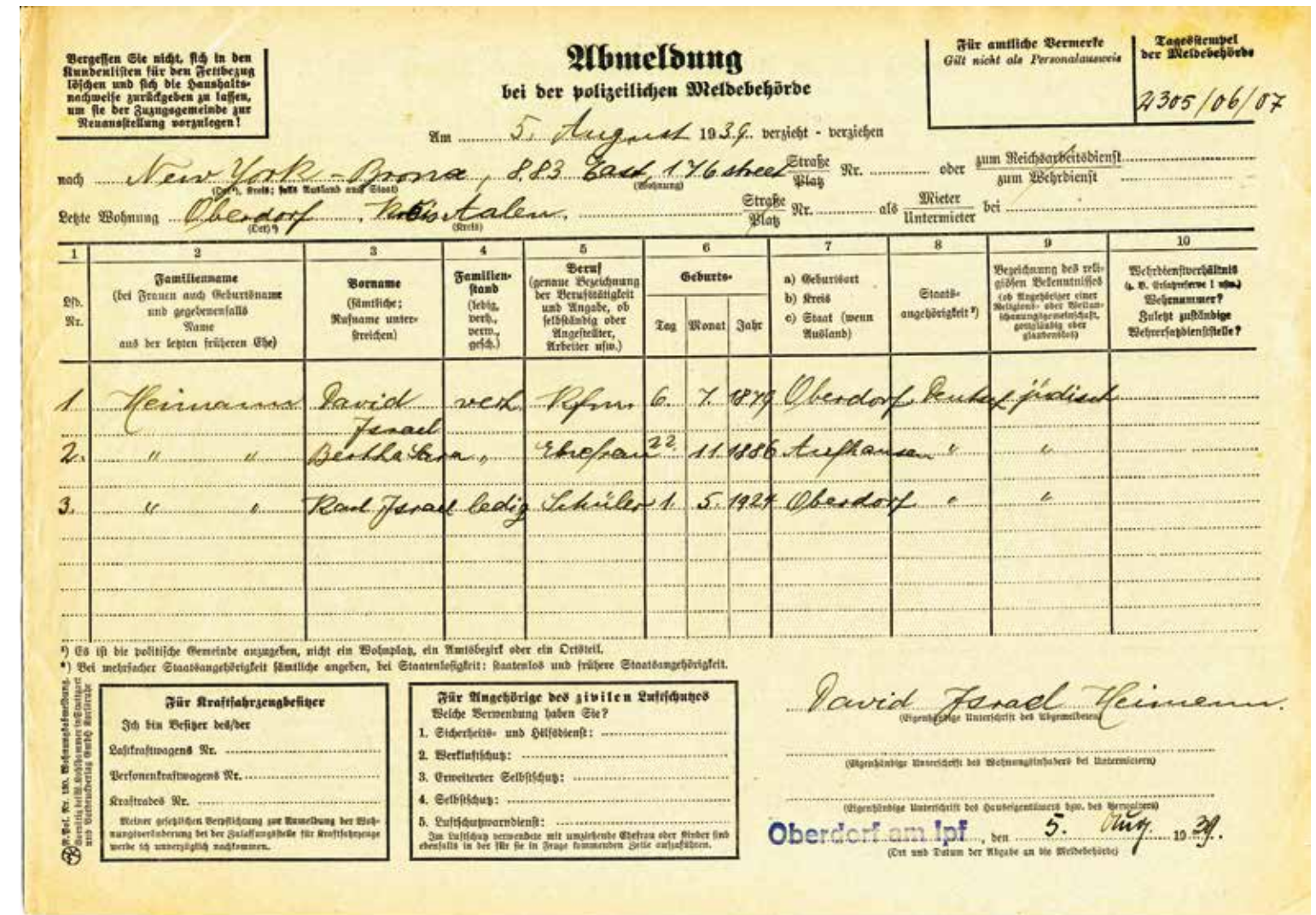
vid and Bertha Heimann, the parents of Heiner, Martin-Udo and Karl.

We crossed the Atlantic on board of the American passenger liner Manhattan. The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor seemed to have a special radiance that memorable day.”

Karl Heiman



65. Passport of David Heimann



66. Notice of departure of David Heimann's family, dated 5 August 1939, with their new address in New York

# Deportation and extermination

## The fate of the Neumetzger family

"In the cemetery..."

Here there is also a tombstone commemorating the shocking end of Siegfried Neumetzger and his family:

According to a witness, the parents and four children aged 4 to 17 were shot in Lublin in 1942 after the father, Siegfried Neumetzger, a front-line soldier in World War I, attacked an SS man who was about to smash the head of their youngest child on a stone."

Quoted from: Paul Sauer, Jewish Communities in Württemberg and Hohenzollern. Monuments, history, fates. Published by the State Archive Administration, Baden-Württemberg 18, Stuttgart 1966, page 143.

The child concerned was Susanne Neumetzger, not yet five years old.



67. Jewish cemetery Bopfingen-Oberdorf. Gravestone of Leopold Neumetzger (23 March 1864 – 23 July 1921) with commemorative inscription

### Abmeldung

bei der polizeilichen Meldebehörde

Für amtliche Vermerke  
Gilt nicht als Personalausweis

Tagesstempel  
der Meldebehörde

Am 24. April 1942 vergibt - vergiesen

nach Leopold Neumetzger (Geburtsort, Kreis; falls Ausland auch Staat) (Wohnung) Straße Nr. 148 oder zum Reichsarbeitsdienst / zum Wehrdienst

Rechte Wohnung Cherdorf 1. Hof Oberdorf (Kreis) (Wohnung) Straße Nr. 148 als Mieter bei \_\_\_\_\_ (Kreis) (Wohnung) Straße Nr. \_\_\_\_\_ als Untermieter

1 Nr.	2 Familienname (bei Frauen auch Geburtsname und gegebenenfalls Name aus der letzten früheren Ehe)	3 Vorname (familiäre; Rufname unterstreichen)	4 Familienstand (ledig, verw., verw., gesch.)	5 Beruf (genaue Bezeichnung der Berufstätigkeit und Angabe, ob selbstständig oder Angestellter, Arbeiter usw.)	6 Geburts-			7 a) Geburtsort b) Kreis c) Staat (wenn Ausland)	8 Staat-angehörigkeit*)	9 Bezeichnung des religiösen Bekenntnisses (ob Angehöriger einer Religions- oder Weltanschauungsgemeinschaft, gottgläubig oder gläubiglos)	10 Wehrdienstverhältnis (z. B. Wehrmann (u. a.)) Wehrnummer? Zuletzt zuständige Wehrverpflichtungsstelle?
					Tag	Monat	Jahr				
1	<u>Leopold Neumetzger</u>	<u>Leopold</u>	<u>verw.</u>	<u>Arbeiter</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>6.</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>Cherdorf</u>	<u>D. 9.</u>	<u>Jude</u>	<u>_____</u>
2	<u>"</u>	<u>Bertha Sara</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>Haushälterin</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>2.</u>	<u>01</u>	<u>Cherdorf</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
3	<u>"</u>	<u>Leo Israel</u>	<u>ledig</u>	<u>Mechaniker</u>	<u>1.</u>	<u>8.</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>Cherdorf</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
4	<u>"</u>	<u>Hertha</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>Haushälterin</u>	<u>21.</u>	<u>8.</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
5	<u>"</u>	<u>Paul Bernhard</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>30.</u>	<u>1.</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
6	<u>"</u>	<u>Susanne Sara</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>21.</u>	<u>12.</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>

\*) Es ist die politische Gemeinde anzugeben, nicht ein Wohnplatz, ein Amtsbezirk oder ein Ortsteil.  
\*) Bei mehrfacher Staatsangehörigkeit sämtliche angeben, bei Staatenlosigkeit: staatenlos und früherer Staatsangehörigkeit.

**Für Kraftfahrzeugbesitzer**

Schlimm Befiger des/der

Kraftfahrzeuges Nr. \_\_\_\_\_

Personenkraftwagenes Nr. \_\_\_\_\_

Kraftwagens Nr. \_\_\_\_\_

Wichtig: geprüfte Berechtigung zur Verwendung der Fahrzeugversicherung bei der Zulassung des Kraftfahrzeuges wird 24 unentgeltlich nachkommen.

**Für Angehörige des zivilen Luftschutzes**

Welche Verwendung haben Sie?

1. Sicherheits- und Hilfsdienst: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Wehrdienst: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Erweiterter Selbstschutz: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Selbstschutz: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Luftschutzmorbidität: \_\_\_\_\_

Im Luftschutz verwendet mit angrenzende Eltern oder Kinder sind ebenfalls in der für sie in Frage kommenden Weise anzugeben.

Leopold Neumetzger  
(Eigenhändige Unterschrift des Wehrmannes)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Eigenhändige Unterschrift des Wohnungsinhabers bei Untermieter)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Eigenhändige Unterschrift des Bevollmächtigten bzw. Bevollmächtigter)

Cherdorf 1. Hof, den 24. April 1942  
(Ort und Datum der Abgabe an die Meldebehörde)

68. Departure into the unknown: On 24 April 1942 the Neumetzger family registered their departure from Oberdorf, giving as their destination: „to the East“

## Opfer à Victims

Name	First name	Year of birth	Deported on	Deported to	Further deported to	Fate	Place of death
Abendstern	Regina	1881	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Berenz	Max	1898	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Berenz	Erna	1912	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Berenz	Abraham	1937	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Berenz	Menasse Manfred	1937	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Berenz	Bela/Marion	1942	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Bergmann	Johanna	1917	1941-12-01	Riga			
Bernheimer	Sigmund	1869	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1943-05-03	Theresienstadt
Bernheimer	Ida	1878	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Missing	Auschwitz
Bodenheimer	Wilhelm	1868	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Gressler	Sofie	1854	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1943-03-26	Theresienstadt
Heidenheimer	Hugo	1872	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Missing	
Heimann	Sali	1880	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	
Heimann	Max	1882	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Heimann	Iulius-Ulrich	1922	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Heinemann	Johanna	1862	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-09-11	Theresienstadt
Hilb	Jenny	1869	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-09-04	Theresienstadt
Hilb	Karoline	1876	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Date of death: 1944-05-16	Auschwitz
Kahn	Fanny	1871	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Kauffmann, Dr.	Eugen	1872	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1943-08-03	Theresienstadt
Kaufmann	Isak	1860	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Eastern Europe	Officially declared death	
Kaufmann	Sofie	1868	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Eastern Europe		
Kaufmann	Elsa	1886	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Officially declared death	
Kronacher	Siegfried	1883	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	
Kroner	Sofie	1876	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Lamm	Sara	1874	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Date of death: 1942-09-26	
Lauchheimer	Fanny	1864	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-12-29	Theresienstadt

## Opfer à Victims

Name	First name	Year of birth	Deported on	Deported to	Further deported to	Fate	Place of death
Lehmann	Isak	1872	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Date of death: 1942-09-29	
Leiter	Eduard	1865	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Eastern Europe	Officially declared death	
Leiter	Ernestine	1870	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Eastern Europe	Officially declared death	
Leiter	Selma(Jette)	1881	1942-04-26	Izbica		Date of death: 1942-04-26	
Leiter	Rosa	1898	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	
Levi	Cilli	1881	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Officially declared death	
Levite	Heinrich	1877	1942-04-26	Izbica		Missing	
Levite	Sara	1882	1942-04-26	Izbica		Missing	
Lewinsohn	Cäcilie	1880	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	
Lindner	Adolf Aron	1883	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1944-02-28	Theresienstadt
Lindner	Theresia	1885	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Officially declared death	
Löwenthal	Max	1876	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Löwenthal	Hedwig	1880	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Mendel	Rosa	1874	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Meyer	Senta	1903	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Meyer	Meta	1915	1941-12-01	Riga/		Survived	
Meyer	Gertrud	1922	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Meyer	Lore	1925	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Meyer	Fritz	1927	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Meyer	Ilse	1930	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Neumaier	Adelheid	1855	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-10-30	Theresienstadt
Neumaier	Pauline	1860	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-09-04	Theresienstadt
Neumaier	Auguste	1868	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-09-23	Theresienstadt
Neumetzger	Karoline (Lina)	1868	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Missing	
Neumetzger	Sally	1872	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Neumetzger	Siegfried	1892	1942-04-26	Izbica		Shot	
Neumetzger	Berta	1901	1942-04-26	Izbica		Shot	

Name	First name	Year of birth	Deported on	Deported to	Further deported to	Fate	Place of death
Neumetzger	Leo	1924	1942-04-26	Izbica		Shot	
Neumetzger	Herbert	1928	1942-04-26	Izbica		Shot	
Neumetzger	Bernhard-Paul	1933	1942-04-26	Izbica		Shot	
Neumetzger	Susanne	1937	1942-04-26	Izbica		Shot	
Pappenheimer	Moses (Max)	1870	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-12-26	Theresienstadt
Pappenheimer	Fanny	1876	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt		Date of death: 1942-09-05	Theresienstadt
Schreiber	Bernhard	1871	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Schreiber	Hedwig	1878	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Schuster	Julius	1874	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Schuster	Selma	1883	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Schuster	Elsa	1904	1941-12-01	Riga		Date of death: 1941-12-01	
Schwabacher	Louis	1878	1942-04-26	Izbica		Missing	
Schweizer	Max	1877	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Schweizer	Ida	1887	1942-04-26	Izbica		Officially declared death	
Schweizer, Dr.	Abraham	1875	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Sicherer	Mina	1873	1941-12-01	Riga ?		Date of death: 1945-05-08	
Sicherer	Albert	1880	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Sicherer	Amalie	1890	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Spandow	Frida	1876	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Missing	
Spier	Pauline	1874	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Auschwitz	Missing	
Spier	Ella	1898	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	
Sternfeld	Berta	1877	1942-07-13	Auschwitz		Missing	
Strauss	Stefan	1923	1941-12-01	Riga		Date of death: 1942-03-26	Shot ?
Thalheimer	Moritz	1883	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Thalheimer	Bella	1886	1941-12-01	Riga		Officially declared death	
Wachtel	Max	1867	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	
Wachtel	Berta	1878	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Officially declared death	

Name	First name	Year of birth	Deported on	Deported to	Further deported to	Fate	Place of death
Wassermann	Alfred	1884	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	
Wassermann	Adolf	1889	1942-07-13	Auschwitz		Date of death: 1942-07-12	
Wassermann	Elise	1889	1942-07-13	Auschwitz		Date of death: 1942-07-13	
Wassermann	Julius	1927	1942-07-13	Auschwitz		Date of death: 1942-07-13	
Wertheimer	Samuel	1874	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Eastern Europe	Officially declared death	
Wertheimer	Sofie	1877	1942-08-22	Theresienstadt	Malytrostinec	Missing	
Wertheimer	Hermine	1885	1941-12-01	Riga		Missing	



69. Jewish cemetery Bopfingen-Oberdorf: Memorial plaques commemorating the victims of Nazi persecution

# Traces of Jewish history in the Ostalb Region

## Aalen

Jewish inhabitants are already recorded in the Middle Age (1412). From about 1900 there are several Jewish trading companies. At least two victims of the Nazi dictatorship.

## Aalen-Wasseraufingen

Few families after 1900. 1933 – 1945 external labor camp of the Natzweiler concentration camp in Alsace; from 1944 containing survivors of the Warsaw Uprising.

## Bopfingen

Jews first recorded in 1241. Expelled in 1545. After 1850 resettlement following the freedom of establishment. Around 1900 approx. 52 Jews. Many Jewish tradesmen, cattle dealers and merchants. Five Jews from Bopfingen were interned in Oberdorf prior to their deportation and murder in the extermination camps.

## Bopfingen-Baldern

Jewish inhabitants documented in 1344. In the 17th century there is a Jewish community with its own synagogue and cemetery. Driven out in 1658. In the 18th century so-called “court Jews”.

## Bopfingen-Flochberg

Jews documented between 1514 and 1538.

## Bopfingen-Itzlingen

Jews documented at the beginning of the 17th century.

## Eschach

Jewish settlement in the 16th century.

## Essingen

In the 17th and 18th centuries “protected Jews” of the Barons of Woellwarth. Letter of protection of 1694 for eight families. Later expelled and accepted in Oberdorf. There is a field name “Judenfriedhof” (Jewish cemetery) and a “Judengasse” (Jewish alley).

## Lauchheim-Röttingen

Resident Jews in the 16th century. “Jewish alley”.

## Neresheim

First mentioned 1479 – 1658 (five families). In 1864: 13 persons.

## Neresheim-Dorfmerkingen

Jews documented between 1555 and 1660. In 1555 three Jews from Dorfmerkingen were accused in a ritual murder trial.

## Riesbürg-Utzmemmingen

Jews are mentioned in 1487; 1538: four families; Jews last mentioned in 1625. Field “Judenhof”.

## Schechingen

Apparently a larger Jewish settlement in the 16th and 17th century. “Jewish alley”, Field “Judenkirchhof (?)”.

## Stöttlen

Resident Jews in the first half of the 19th century (1812: 12 families) until 1871.

## Unterschneidheim-Zipplingen




Jews in the 16th century, first mentioned 1528. “Jewish alley”.

## Unterschneidheim-Zöbingen

Mentioned since 1520. Jews are mentioned in the 16th and 17th century. A “Jewish alley” is a reminder of their presence.

Municipalities with Jewish communities are described in the next few pages.

## Spuren jüdischer Geschichte im Ostalbkreis:

-  Jüdische Gemeinde
-  Kleinere Ansiedlung
-  Jüdischer Friedhof



70. Traces of Jewish history in the Ostalb region



# Jewish community in Aufhausen

**1560**  
The Jew Abraham is mentioned in a legal dispute.

**1587**  
27 Jews live in Aufhausen.

**1587 – 1600**  
25 Jews from Aufhausen are mentioned in the mass attendance records from Nördlingen.

**1643 – 1659**  
Nine Jews live in Aufhausen.

**1655**  
Letter of protection from the Counts of Oettingen for the Jews in Aufhausen.

**1659**  
Expulsion of the Jews from Aufhausen by the Count's widow Isabella Eleonore von Oettingen.

**1665**  
First mention of the (certainly older) Jewish cemetery: Request by the Jews of Lauchheim to be allowed to bury their dead in the cemetery at Aufhausen is granted on payment of a fee. Size of the cemetery 4143 m<sup>2</sup>; 355 tombstones remain.

**1705**  
27 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1730**  
The Jews of Aufhausen are granted permission by the overlord to build a synagogue.

**1736**  
26 Jewish families (about 130 persons) in Aufhausen.

**1753**  
Aufhausen subordinate to the rabbinate in Oettingen. Rabbi in Aufhausen: Abraham Levi.

**1757**  
Aufhausen subordinate to the country rabbinate in Wallerstein. Rabbi in Aufhausen: Löw Uhlmann.

**1777**  
Building of a new synagogue.

**1788**  
34 Jewish families in Aufhausen.

**1806**  
Two Jewish school masters live in Aufhausen.

**1806**  
Last letter of protection for eight Jewish families in Aufhausen.

**1810**  
42 Jewish families in Aufhausen.

**1823**  
Building of a new synagogue with classrooms and teacher's quarters. The old synagogue is sold.

**1824**  
234 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1828**  
Founding of a Jewish confessional school; accommodated in the synagogue as from 1829.

**1832**  
Aufhausen subordinate to the rabbinate in Oberdorf.

**1839**  
Building of the women's bath opposite the synagogue. The building still exists today.

**1843**  
328 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1854**  
378 Jews in Aufhausen: now the largest number of persons.

**1864**  
Rebuilding of the Jewish school.

**1869**  
211 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1886**  
107 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1900**  
56 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1901**  
Closure of the Jewish school due to lack of pupils (only five pupils).

**1910**  
15 Jews in Aufhausen.

**1910**  
Dissolution of the Jewish community in Aufhausen due to lack of members; the Jews in Aufhausen remained affiliated to Oberdorf until 1925.

**1914 to 1918**  
Ten Jews from Aufhausen fought in World War I, three of whom were killed.

**1925**  
Nine Jews in Aufhausen.

**1931**  
The synagogue is closed down. During the war the building is used as home for the Hitler Youth, after the war it is sold and partially demolished.

**1933**  
Six Jews in Aufhausen.

**1940**  
Last funeral at the Jewish cemetery.

**1941**  
Four Jews were murdered during the Nazi period.

## Public figures:

Gabriel Hess was born in Aufhausen in 1817 and went on to make a name for himself as a manufacturer in Paris.

According to a former Jewish inhabitant of Oberdorf, the large Rheingold brewery in New York, founded in 1883, belonged to the Liebman family (until 1963) who hailed from Aufhausen.

Senior teacher Leopold Liebmann (1805 – 1893) was one of the ablest Israelite educationalist of the 19th century in Württemberg. For many years he ran the Jewish orphanage in Esslingen. (P. Sauer)



71. Aufhausen synagogue



72. Interior of the Aufhausen synagogue



73. Jewish cemetery in Aufhausen

## Jewish community in Ellwangen

1298

15 Jews are slain during the Rintfleisch pogrom in Ellwangen.

1349

Plague in Ellwangen. The Jews are accused of being the guilty party and murdered. The Nuremberg memory book alludes to the wiping out of the Jewish community Ellwangen.

1381

Jews are mentioned again in an Ellwangen rent-roll.

1428 und 1443

Jews from Ellwangen are buried in the cemetery in Nördlingen.

1445

The Jew Koppelman from Wemding and his family are admitted to Ellwangen against a protection fee of 12 gulden.

1646

Six Jewish families are granted the right to trade on the territory of the princely priory, on condition among others that they do not lend any citizen more than 40 gulden.

1674

The right of 1646 may only be passed on to the first-born child, but not sold.

1753

A Jew is arrested for theft.

1767

The daughter of the Oettingen Court Jew, Hänle Mayer, converts to Christianity in Ellwangen.

1823

The Hess family moves to Ellwangen.

1854

18 Jews in Ellwangen.

1863

20 Jews in Ellwangen.

1870

Foundation of the Jewish community in Ellwangen as part of the rabbinat in Oberdorf.

1877

A prayer room is installed in the Rössle inn.

1886

99 Jews in Ellwangen.

1892

67 Jews in Ellwangen.

1899 to 1926

A prayer room exists in the old Capuchin Convent in the Marienpflege.

1901

Establishment of the Jewish cemetery on the Hungerberg; prior to this burials were in Aufhausen. 23 burials in all up to 1938. 19 gravestones remain at the cemetery in Ellwangen.

1910

32 Jews in Ellwangen.

1925

17 Jews in Ellwangen.



74. Jewish cemetery in Ellwangen

1926 to 1933

Prayer room in the chamber building. The Jewish community is given notice to quit, at the instigation of the Nazi Party, which is looking for an assembly room.

1935

Dissolution of the Jewish community Ellwangen.

1936

13 Jews in Ellwangen.

1940

There are no more Jews in Ellwangen.

## Jewish community in Schwäbisch Gmünd

1241

First record of Jews from Schwäbisch Gmünd, who pay 12 silver marks in taxes. Reference to a large Jewish community.

1348 – 1350

Plague in Schwäbisch Gmünd. *“The Jewish community was annihilated by an act of mob violence after being accused of poisoning the well.”*

1412 and 1427

A Jew tax is again levied: Evidence of a new Jewish community.

1433

The Jews of Gmünd together with the Jews from Reutlingen pay 600 gulden “coronation tax” on the occasion of the coronation of Emperor Siegmund.

1469

Expulsion of some of the Jews. They sell their synagogue to the town.

1501

The imperial town of Gmünd purchases the right to expel the Jews from Emperor Maximilian, valid for ten years. Some of the Jews from Gmünd find refuge with the Counts of Oettingen.

1521

Karl V declares the expulsion of the Jews from Gmünd “in perpetuity”.

1861

Two Jews live in Gmünd.

1869

22 Jews in Gmünd.

1874

Foundation of the Gutmann & Söhne bank in Gmünd.

1886

67 Jews in Gmünd.

1890

Foundation of the Israelite community in Gmünd as part of the rabbinat in Oberdorf. Burials in the cemetery at Oberdorf.

1890 to 1918

The Jewish community in Gmünd maintains a prayer room.

1900

81 Jews in Gmünd; 1910: 73 Jews in Gmünd; 1914: 71 Jews in Gmünd.

1914

13 Jewish participants from Gmünd in World War I, four of whom are killed.

1918

Prayer room in the Hotel Rad.

1919

Prayer room in the Prediger building.

1925

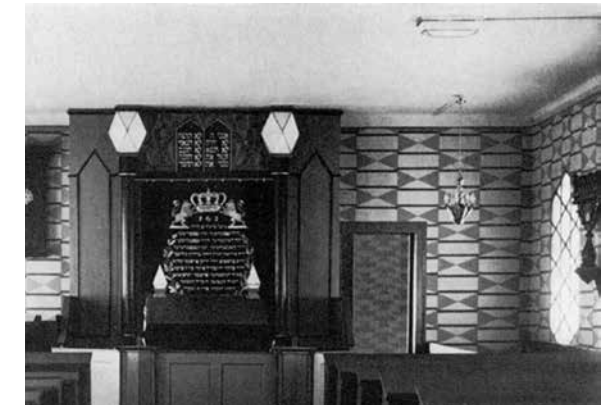
Conversion of a factory building in Katharinen Strasse 4 to a synagogue.

1926

Consecration of the synagogue in Gmünd.

1933

90 Jews in Gmünd.



75. Interior of the synagogue Schwäbisch Gmünd

1934

The interior of the synagogue in Gmünd is desecrated.

1938

14 Jews in Gmünd.

1938

The interior of the synagogue is destroyed in the Kristallnacht.

1939

17 May: The synagogue in the Katharinen Strasse is sold to the Kreissparkasse savings bank for 21,500 reichsmarks.

1939

The Israelite community Gmünd is disbanded in July.

1941

22 of the Jews living in Gmünd in 1933 and the new arrivals between 1933 and 1939 are deported. One person, Nanette Rothschild, survived the deportation.

## Jewish community in Lauchheim

1658

Six Jewish families are driven out of the county of Oettingen-Baldern. They are accepted in Lauchheim by the Commander of the Teutonic Knights, Philipp von Gravenegg, for a period of ten years on payment of protection money; among them is the family of the cantor Koppel Rabin. The letter of protection specifies what they are permitted to do: to carry on trade of all kinds.

1658

Six Jewish families in Lauchheim.

1668

The six Jewish homeowners in Lauchheim pay 10 thalers per house, those renting pay five thalers and the parish priest four thalers.

1668

The Jews of Lauchheim trade in cattle and goods as well as acting as middlemen.

1678

55 Jews in Lauchheim.

1686

First mention of a synagogue.

1691

The Jews are freed from compulsory service, guard duty and running errands, on payment of a fee of 24 gulden.

1716

Lauchheim has an own rabbi.

1716

A school master for Jewish children is mentioned.

1717

61 Jews in Lauchheim.

1728 to 1733

Rabbi Schmul Bloch.

1743

The synagogue burns down.

1744 to 1751

Rabbi Josef Isaak.

1768 – 1770

Building of a new synagogue.

1775

Mention is made of a class room for Jewish children.



76. Isaak Hess

1788

88 Jews in Lauchheim.

1806

Lauchheim initially belongs to the Ellingen rabbinate; from 1806 to 1832 to the rabbinate of Wallerstein.

1807

78 Jews in Lauchheim.

1823

97 Jews in Lauchheim.

1829

New Jewish school building.

### Isaak Hess

was born in Lauchheim in 1789 and at age 13 was sent to the rabbinical school in Fürth. After four years, he chose to learn a commercial profession in Harburg and Laupheim. In 1817 he was elected head of the Jewish community in his hometown where he set up an antiquarian bookshop. In 1823 he moved to Ellwangen where he founded a boarding school for Jewish theologians following an examination before the consistory. Above all he showed great commitment to the care of Jewish orphans. In 1830 he founded the “Württemberg Association for the Care of Poor Israelite Orphans and Neglected Children” which continued in existence until the Third Reich. He died in Ellwangen in 1866 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Aufhausen.

1832

Affiliated to the rabbinate Oberdorf.

1843

124 Jews in Lauchheim.

1849

The Jewish community purchases a house for 5000 gulden to house the school, mikveh, teacher’s quarters and a meeting room.

1856 – 1859

The synagogue is renovated and enlarged. 1886: 107 Jews in Lauchheim. 1910: 32 Jews in Lauchheim.

1914

The Jewish school is closed due to lack of pupils.

1914 – 1918

Seven Jews from Lauchheim fought in the war, S. Freimann was killed.

1921

The synagogue is sold.

1922

The Jewish community Lauchheim is disbanded and the Jews assigned to Oberdorf.

1925

11 Jews in Lauchheim.

1933

Seven Jews in Lauchheim.

1938

The synagogue is deconsecrated and later used as a barn.



77. Lauchheim synagogue. Press photo prior to being demolished

1942

Six Jews are deported and murdered in the extermination camps.

1965

The former synagogue is demolished.



78. Former Jewish school in Lauchheim

## Jewish community in Pflaumloch

**1487**  
Protected Jews of the Counts of Oettingen live in Pflaumloch.

**1490 – 1494**  
Jews of Pflaumloch are buried in the cemetery in Nördlingen.

**1491**  
Jews from Nördlingen settle in Pflaumloch.

**1538**  
Notary Binder from Nördlingen visits the Jews in Pflaumloch to try and prevent them settling within a two league zone around Nördlingen.

**1563**  
A Jew from Pflaumloch named Hirsch is mentioned in a legal dispute in Bopfingen.

**1587 – 1600**  
46 Jews from Pflaumloch are recorded as attending the Pentecostal Fair in Nördlingen.

**1590**  
Schoolmaster Moses in Pflaumloch.

**1649**  
A letter of protection is issued which also covers the Jews from Pflaumloch.

**1658**  
Seven Jewish families in Pflaumloch.

**1668**  
Nine Jewish homeowners in Pflaumloch.

**1684**  
The Jew named David owns property worth 5000 gulden while the other 14 members of the community have assets of between 50 and 400 gulden.

**1687**  
15 Jewish households in eight houses.

**1688**  
18 Jewish families live in eight houses.

**1731**  
Pflaumloch is assigned to the country rabbinate of Wallerstein.

**1735**  
According to the letter of protection: 15 protected Jews with their families.

**1752**  
The Jews from Pflaumloch are permitted to lend money at an interest of up to 8 %.

**1756**  
About 18 Jewish families in Pflaumloch build a synagogue with the permission of the Count.

**1779**  
18 protected Jews and their families in Pflaumloch.

**1788**  
15 protected Jews and their families in Pflaumloch.

**1802**  
The synagogue is burnt down in a major fire. 18 Jewish houses and 33 Christian houses are also destroyed.

**1803**  
A new synagogue is built on the same site.

**1806**  
Last letter of protection for the Jews in Pflaumloch for 34 protected Jews and their families.

**1806**  
Only 7 % interest may now be charged in moneylending.

**1812**  
112 Jews in Pflaumloch.

**1821**  
A mikveh is established in Pflaumloch.

**1824**  
187 Jews in Pflaumloch.

**1829**  
With fear of cholera, a plot of land is purchased for a cemetery, but the cemetery is not built.

**1831**  
221 Jews in Pflaumloch.

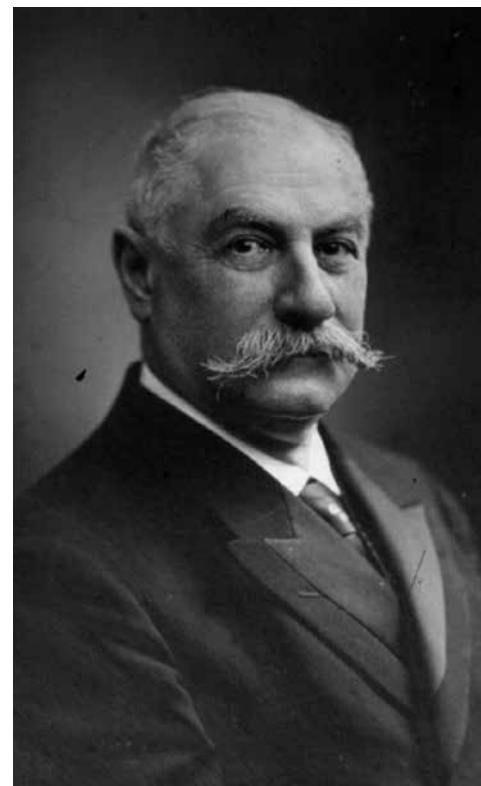


79. Former synagogue in Pflaumloch. Today the town hall of Riesbürg



80. Jewish cemetery in Pflaumloch

- 1832**  
The mikveh is relocated to the newly built rabbinic building which also houses the school and the teacher's quarters. The old mikveh is sold to master butcher Samson Löwengard.
- 1837**  
The Jewish community purchases a plot of land next to the Christian cemetery and builds a cemetery there.
- 1840 – 1905**  
53 burials in the Jewish cemetery.
- 1843**  
242 Jews in Pflaumloch.
- 1844**  
After acquiring a farmstead on the main road, a new synagogue is built and completed in 1846 at a cost of 20,000 gulden.
- 1846**  
18 December: Consecration of the new synagogue.
- 1847**  
The old synagogue is sold to the Jews Simon Dessauer, Markus Ellinger and Salomon Jung who convert it into a coach house, threshing floor and stables.
- 1850 – 1876**  
60 Jews leave their hometown: 28 emigrate to America, 32 to larger towns.
- 1854**  
255 Jews in Pflaumloch (total population: 558 persons).
- 1869**  
155 Jews in Pflaumloch.
- 1877**  
Only 20 Jews still registered as pursuing a trade.
- 1882**  
Only 10 Jews now registered as pursuing a trade.
- 1886**  
74 Jews in Pflaumloch.
- 1895**  
Only six Jews still registered as pursuing a trade.
- 1900**  
21 Jews in Pflaumloch.
- 1906**  
Alexander von Pflaum donates the now defunct synagogue building to the town council in Pflaumloch.
- 1926**  
Desecration of the Jewish cemetery. 17 gravestones are damaged.
- 1964**  
Conversion of the former synagogue to become the town hall.



81. Alexander von Pflaum

**Alexander von Pflaum**  
Born in Pflaumloch in 1839, died in Berlin in 1911.

As commercial counselor, banker, industrialist and Saxon consul general he had a major influence on the banking sector in Württemberg. Like his father before him, he also was a generous philanthropist, gifting the former synagogue his hometown in his lifetime. The municipality thanked him by making him an honorary citizen.

The letter granting him the freedom of the town reads:

*“This is to grant the generous donor of the community hall in Pflaumloch, Commercial Counselor Mr. Alexander von Pflaum in Stuttgart, in gratitude the honorary citizenship of the municipality of Pflaumloch and personally hand over the letter of honorary citizenship on the occasion of the handover ceremony at the community hall.”*

He is commemorated by a brass plaque near the entrance to the building and by a street which is named after him.



82. Riesbürg-Pflaumloch, memorial plaque at the entrance to the town hall

*Former synagogue of the Jewish community in Pflaumloch  
Former citizen of Pflaumloch and  
Commercial Counselor Alexander von Pflaum  
owner of the Pflaum & Co. bank in Stuttgart  
donated this building to the municipality  
in 1907.  
Alexander von Pflaum  
\* 4 June 1839 in Pflaumloch  
† 14 December 1911 in Berlin*

## Display Cabinet with Religious Artifacts

In 1997 Bernard Noymer (formerly Neumetzger) visited Oberdorf with his wife, Sandra Noymer, and their four children.

It was his greatest wish to show his four children the village where their Neumetzger ancestors had lived for many generations since early in the 18th century. For the Neumetzger family, the visit to the time-honored Oberdorf Synagogue was both moving and harrowing.

The murder of Siegfried Neumetzger and his family in the Izbica extermination camp is among those commemorated in the museum that now occupies the synagogue building.

On his return to the USA, Bernard Noymer decided to set up a trust for “his” old synagogue in Oberdorf as a sign of enduring solidarity. The artifacts used in Jewish families on the Sabbath should be shown in a display cabinet next to the cabinet in which the Heimann Torah scroll is displayed.

The Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf was overjoyed by this demonstration of the Noymer family’s close ties with the center of its forefathers’ religious life in Oberdorf, and ensured the rapid realization of the project, which was financed entirely by Bernard Noymer.

In a ceremony held in September 2000, Bernard Noymer presented the display cabinet containing religious artifacts to the Chairman of the Support Association, Dr. Diethelm Winter.

Arno Fern, of the Israelite Religious Community in Württemberg, explained the signifi-

cance of the religious artifacts. With his chanting, Moshe Hayoun, cantor of the Stuttgart Synagogue, reminded the numerous guests attending the ceremony of the time when Oberdorf was the focal point of a large Jewish community.



*At a ceremony numerous religious artifacts were presented by the Noymer family to the Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf. From the left: Dr. Diethelm Winter, retired Head of the District Administration, Ruth Noymer, Sandra Noymer, Bernard Noymer, Felix Suttschek, the town’s Cultural Affairs’ Officer, and Arno Fern.*

*Foto: Schwäbische Post*

## “Eternal Light”

Following the death of our good friend Bernard Noymer in 2004, his brother, Arthur Noymer, stepped into his shoes to continue the close relationship between the Noymer family and the Support Association for the Former Synagogue in Oberdorf.

Together with his brother, Fritz Noymer, he donated an “Eternal Light” in memory of his brother to the former synagogue in Oberdorf, which has come to be close to the hearts of all the Noymers.

In May 2005 the sanctuary lamp, created by Jacob Abitbol, was presented to Dr. Diethelm Winter, Chairman of the Support Association, by Arthur Noymer at a ceremony following a moment of silence in memory of Bernard Noymer.

Almost the entire Noymer family (18 people in all) made the journey from the USA to be present at this memorable occasion. They were all deeply moved by this experience in the homeland of their Neumetzger forefathers.

Just prior to this, in February 2005, Arthur Noymer decided to provide permanent support for our work in the former synagogue in Oberdorf.

Arthur Noymer did not want to keep for himself any of the funds released following the ruling of an international court and stemming from the estate of Siegfried Neumetzger, who was murdered in the extermination camp at Izbica during the Third Reich.

With the words, “I think it is appropriate that this money should be returned to its ori-

gins, in particular to the old synagogue, now a museum in memory of the Jewish inhabitants of Oberdorf,” he donated the entire bequest to the Support Association for its long-term use.

It has enabled us to put our work in the struggle against anti-Semitism and xenophobia on a firm financial footing, and to secure and extend it.

Until his death in January 2013, there was an extremely friendly relationship between Arthur Noymer and his son David, and those responsible for our Support Association. Just a few weeks before he died, we received further substantial financial assistance from Arthur Noymer for our Support Association, which will enable us to successfully accomplish our current project.

We are very grateful for all his help and will revere the memory of our friend and benefactor Arthur Noymer.



*“Hear, oh Israel” is written in Hebrew, together with an inscription about the donation, on the base of the sanctuary lamp, created by Jewish artist, Jacob Abitbol. Arthur Noymer (r.) and our Chairman, Dr. Diethelm Winter, at the presentation.*

*Foto: Schwäbische Post.*

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