

Jews from the Schwalm region deported in 1942 (listed according to place of residence and in alphabetical order)

Sources: Bernd Lindenthal, Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn, Über Juden in Treysa – Von den Anfängen bis 1942, in: Heimatvertriebene Nachbarn, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Juden im Kreis Ziegenhain, hg. V. H. Bambey, A. Biskamp, B. Lindenthal, Bd. 1, Schwalmstadt-Treysa 1993; hereafter cited as: #B. Lindenthal, Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn, with page number. B. Lindenthal has kindly authorized use of photographs.

Treysa:

The brothers Josef and Emanuel ABRAHAM: Emanuel ABRAHAM (born on 15 August 1879 in Treysa) and Josef (Joseph) ABRAHAM (born on 28 March 1877 in Treysa).

The fate of the Abraham brothers is special in that the older brother, Josef Abraham, was among those deported in September 1942 and survived the concentration camp Theresienstadt. Emanuel, the younger brother, was deported towards the end of May 1942 and died in the concentration camp Sobibor in June 1942.

Family:

Emanuel and Josef (Joseph) were the sons of the merchant and wholesaler Scholem (Scholum) Abraham and his wife Biene (Bienchen), who had nine children altogether, of whom only six survived their first year. Their brother Salomon (born 23 January 1871) fought in World War I and was recorded as “fallen on the field of honour“. He died from his war injuries in 1919 and lies buried in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa. Their father, Scholem Abraham, was on the board of elders of the Jewish community for a certain time and since the 1890s a member of the city council of Treysa. Their mother, Bienchen, was a founding member of the Israeli Women’s Association, which was devoted primarily to the care of the sick and maternity care.

Background/Career:

Following the deaths of their father, Scholem Abraham, and their brother Salomon in 1919, the brothers became owners of the house and business, with Josef Abraham listed as the main owner of the house number 274, today Steingasse 43 and 45, and his siblings as co-owners. Both are listed in the tax records (“Heberolle“) of 1921.

Josef Abraham’s shop for “suit fabrics, dress fabrics, linen, etc.“ (according to an advertisement dated 1932) was located on the Town Hall Square of the period (Marktplatz 8), at the corner of Burggasse. Their head office and childhood home was in the lower section of the street called Steingasse. (below: advertisement for Josef Abraham’s shop, in the newspaper Schwalmbote, 30 January 1932, see B. Lindenthal)

Emanuel, Josef and Recha Abraham were registered members of the club Knüllgebirgsverein (Knüll Mountain Club) and Josef was a registered member of the conservative Treysa Citizens’ Club (Bürgerverein), which was closely associated with the Home Owners’ Club (Hausbesitzerverein), whose members owned the houses in the core city. The Citizens’ Club

tried to exert influence on the urban policy of the town council and the magistrate. They put their own candidates and lists up for election. In 1932 and 1933 Josef Abraham was the auditor of the club.



Josef Abraham (the sixth from the right) appears in the group photograph of the hiking group of the Knüll Mountain Club in 1931 (see B. Lindenthal).

After 1933:

Josef and Emanuel Abraham, along with the Jewish (Israelite) Community and other business people, used ads and public notices in, for example, the edition of the local paper “Schwalm-Bote“ (“Schwalm Messenger“) dated 8 March 1933 to retaliate against the first systematically planned nationwide anti-Semitic action of the Nazi regime on 1 April 1933, the so-called “boycott of Jewish businesses“, which had already begun in Treysa in March with accusations against Jewish business owners to the effect that they had allegedly financially and otherwise supported the Communist Party. The ads and public notices stated that the Jewish Community and businesses had neither donated money nor collected donations for political purposes and would furthermore take legal action against such rumours. The brothers were not among the 29 probably younger people from Treysa who were part of the first wave of immigration up to 1934 in reaction to increasing state reprisals, including occupational bans. Despite the second phase of anti-Semitic measures up to the historic pogrom night in 1938, the brothers could not bring themselves to emigrate. More than 40 Jews from Treysa did leave their hometown or place of residence. Individual acts of violence took place on 8 November 1938. Then, on the morning of 9 November 1938, local group leader (Ortsgruppenleiter) Bachmann asked the principal of Treysa’s city school to give a group of pupils a day’s “leave of absence“ in order to go on a rampage against buildings and businesses in the immediate vicinity of the central church in Treysa’s inner city. They were joined later by 21-year-old Hans Knauf as their leader. The third Jewish shop whose windows they smashed in order to enter and throw merchandise onto the street was located on the Market Square and belonged to Josef Abraham. Karl Zulauf, at the time a 14-year-old city administration apprentice, witnessed this together with employee Ernst Hohmeyer (mayor of Treysa from 1948 to 1970) out of the window of his office on the second floor of the town hall and reported later: ... *“we heard the noise the schoolboys were making who barged into Josef Abraham’s shop, smashed the*

windows etc. [...] where I recognized some boys aged 11 to 13 and saw feathers from the bedding flying around on Market Square... “ (cited in: B. Lindenthal, Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn, p.332) The verdict of the district court of Marburg dated 8 May 1946 states the following in their explanation of the “reasons“ for conviction on the grounds of serious breach of the peace: “...the defendant Knauf marched with a hoard of schoolboys to the Market Square and forcefully entered the shop of the Jew Abraham, which was completely plundered. The defendant Knauf and the schoolboys who had forcefully entered Abraham’s shop threw bolts of cloth and runner fabrics out of the shop and onto the Market Square, where they were trampled on and ruined by the crowd that had formed there. In addition, they tore open sacks of bed feathers and down and emptied them onto the Market Square... “ (material M6 in: B. Lindenthal, Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn, p. 368). This was met with disapproval by some of the crowd: Karl Zulauf stated that mothers told their sons to take the stolen goods back to Josef Abraham’s shop. After his lunch break Zulauf cycled back to the inner city that afternoon and learned of the ravaging of the half-timbered synagogue in the street called Neuer Weg located approximately 100 m down the hill from the Stadtkirche (the town church). Josef Abraham was one of the men from the Jewish Community who were deported to the concentration camp Buchenwald after the historic pogrom night.

Flight and deportation:

Recha, their brother Salomon’s oldest daughter, had married Karl (Julius Carl) Katz from Witzenhausen in 1929. The couple lived in Witzenhausen, where their daughter Susanne was born on 7 October 1930. All three succeeded in emigrating to Palestine in October 1939; Josef Abraham was officially named as their “asset manager.“ Emanuel and his older brother Josef were deported in May 1942 and on 1 September 1942 respectively; Josef was sent to Theresienstadt. He survived the camp and went to Switzerland in 1945. From there he remained sporadically in contact with the mayor of Treysa, Ernst Hohmeyer, among others. In a letter to Hohmeyer dated July 1956 he reported the circumstances of his deportation in 1942 and the events leading to it as he remembered them. “Since I experienced the time of the Nazi regime up to my deportation in the first half of September 1942 and since I am the only survivor among the Jews deported from Treysa, I can deliver the detailed report you wished, as far as I can remember...“ (cited according to material 7, B. Lindenthal, Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn, p. 374)

Jettchen FREUDENTHAL (née Löwenstern, born on 20 April 1865 in Affoldern, residing in Treysa), Henriette Freudenthal’s maiden name was Löwenstern, sie originally came from Affoldern, “Jettchen“ was the nickname by which she was known.

In January 1886 she married Moses Freudenthal from Mehlen (called Edertal today) and moved with him to Kleinern that same year. Their daughter Karoline, called Lina, was born there in 1894. Karoline married a textile merchant from Niederurff called Theodor Schön, known as Theo. Their daughter Lina was born in Kleinern on 22 July 1928. Theo had a shop there which was demolished by the SA in the early 1930s. Theo Schön then had to give up his business, and the family moved to Treysa, where a large part of the Schön family lived, with

Theo's mother-in-law, Jettchen Freudenthal, shortly after 1933. Jettchen's husband, Moses, was presumably dead, although the precise date of his death has not been established. In 1933 the entire family was still registered in Kleinern. There is a gravestone for Lina Schön, née Freudenthal, in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa, marked with the date of her death, 22 June 1939 (see the middle photo). She died from pneumonia in the Hephata Clinic. Her daughter Hannelore first went to school in Treysa. Her father, Theodor, registered her in the Jewish orphanage in Frankfurt/Main, Röderweg, on 6 January 1939, from where she was sent to Holland by Kindertransport (children's transport) on 8 January 1940. She was put in the orphanage Nederlands-Israelitisch Meisjesweeshuis, Amsterdam, Rapenburgerstraat. Together with others she was imprisoned in the camp Westerbork in February 1943 and then taken to the concentration camp Sobibor, where she died in March 1943. (source: <https://www.dokin.nl/deceasedchildren/hannelore-schon-born-22-jul-1928/>.)



A photo of Hannelore, similar to a passport photo, taken from the website www.dokin.nl, is seen here on the right. The website is operated by the musician Miriam Keesing. Theodor Schön was imprisoned in the work education camp Breitenau in 1941, deported to the concentration camp Sachsenhausen in 1942 and murdered there. Descendants of the Schön family had a gravestone put up in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa marked with the name of Jettchen Freudenthal (see photo on the left). She was among those deported in September 1942.

Jettchen HEILBRUNN, (born on 23 February 1879 in Abterode, final place of residence Treysa, Wagnergasse), was born in Abterode as the daughter of the book binder (and kosher slaughterer) Elieser (Leiser) Heilbrunn and his wife Sprinz (née Goldschmidt). For the major part of her life she lived in Merzhausen and is listed as “murdered in the holocaust“ in the register of the community of Merzhausen.

Abraham HÖXTER, (born on 25 May 1862 in Neukirchen, final place of residence Treysa, Steingasse) and his **wife, Gretchen HÖXTER** (née Lichtenstein, born on 6 October 1883 in Meiningen)

This information is based mainly on the doctoral thesis of Georg Möller, “Jüdische Tierärzte im Deutschen Reich in der Zeit von 1918 bis 1945“, found online under [Projektskizze \(d-nb.info\)](http://Projektskizze(d-nb.info)), in the following cited as G. Möllers, with page number. Also recommendable is the following outline of the discrimination and persecution of Jewish veterinarians: [DTBI 02](http://DTBI02)

[2019 juedische-Tieraerzte.pdf](#) by co-authors Geog Möller and Michael Schimanski. Both refer to previous works and materials of Bernd Lindenthal.

The veterinarian Abraham Höxter was a personality known and respected beyond the Schwalm region. He was born on 25 May 1862 in Neukirchen, not far from Treysa. There he opened his veterinary practice after completing his studies and moved to Treysa in 1897. In 1906 he married Gretchen Lichtenstein from Meiningen, who was 21 years younger. The couple had a son, Werner, born in 1907. Werner Höxter later studied law, but lost his job as juridical assessor in 1935 and emigrated to Palestine. His daughter, Dr. Miriam Höxter, visited Treysa in 2014 at the age of 75, when she learned of the project called “Stolpersteine“ (“stumbling blocks“) and heard that one of these memorial paving stones had been laid in memory of her grandparents.

Abraham Höxter made a name for himself in many respects: he was a widely acknowledged and popular veterinarian, was involved in veterinary professional associations and a number of clubs in Treysa, among which was the rifle club, and did scientific research mainly in the field of the development of veterinary medicine. It was known that he and his wife produced medicines themselves and used them successfully in Höxter’s veterinary practice. His main areas of work lay in the treatment and development of vaccinations against foot and mouth disease as well as infectious anaemia in horses. He had intensive contacts with scientists in his own country and abroad, for example Emil von Behring in Marburg and French government agencies. He was often consulted in the field of fighting infectious anaemia in horses. Because of these contacts, his passport was confiscated in 1933 in order to prevent “German intellectual property leaking out into foreign countries.“ (G. Möllers, p. 165)

Even before World War I Höxter’s range of influence went beyond the Schwalm region and extended to the whole of Hesse. In his own town he was among the first people to own a car, as early as 1912. But he lived in modest circumstances in a rented flat on Bahnhofstrasse (Station Road) in Treysa. (on the left: a photo depicting Höxter’s car on Bahnhofstrasse in Treysa in 1933, right: Abraham and Gretchen Höxter)



Höxter was active in local politics even before 1914. At the time of the Weimar Republic he served as city councillor for the German Democratic Party and was intermittently head of the municipal council. Later he became district councillor. After his passport was confiscated in 1933 on flimsy grounds, he gave up his veterinary practice officially around 1934, but his

expert opinion and veterinary treatments continued to be much in demand. This was probably due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the Schwalm region from 1938 to 1940. Apparently he was driven to neighbouring towns and villages by a taxi company. Since he no longer had all the necessary equipment at his disposal at that time, he turned to deacon Titus Fröhling, a male nurse at the church hospital of Hephata in Treysa who was responsible for the management of medical equipment, and asked him to let him use obsolete syringes. He had made Fröhlich's acquaintance while he was in hospital. Apparently Fröhling reluctantly consented. Informers from the local Nazi party made a public scandal of it, aimed at Hephata as an institution as well as at Höxter. Under the leadership of local group leader Bachmann, a group of party members seized Höxter at his flat and took him to Hephata. There the male nurse Fröhling was taken into their custody at the hospital, and both were led to the Market Square by the vociferous group, where they were verbally attacked and insulted. The group claimed that the obsolete syringes were instruments that would later be used for the treatment of humans. Fröhling and Hephata were accused of collaborating with the Jew Höxter, with the intention of replacing the members of the board of directors of Hephata and thereby bringing them onto the path of the Nazi party. Fröhling was imprisoned for two weeks, Höxter was released after interrogation. He and his wife made plans to emigrate, but did not succeed, even though their popularity offered a certain degree of protection. Höxter was subjected to more and more obvious and direct discrimination in professional circles. In the end, the Höxter family – along with others in Treysa – were relocated to prescribed flats in so-called "houses for Jews". The fact that the supply situation was becoming more precarious for Jews made him try to organize food and supplies for himself and his wife indirectly. Many cases are documented in which residents of Treysa helped him and other residents of the "house for Jews" ("Schön'sches Haus") on Steingasse in Treysa. It was clear to Höxter that these developments posed a threat to his life and that of his wife. He himself stated that he had considered committing suicide. It has been claimed that upon deportation from Treysa he was already dead on the way from Treysa to Kassel. Since neither his son nor other witnesses ever confirmed this, it can be assumed that the couple were deported together in September 1942 along with the remaining Jewish residents of Treysa "to the East".

Abraham KATZENSTEIN (junior, born on 9 May 1884 in Treysa), place of residence Treysa, Wagnergasse, and his wife **Sophie KATZENSTEIN** (née Rothschild, born 30 March 1900 in Netra) were deported in late May 1942.

Family: The Katzenstein family from Treysa were branched out widely. Their family history began in Treysa with Levi Katzenstein in around 1800. Through his wife, Sara Abraham, the family were related by blood or marriage to the Jewish families called Schwalm, Schwalmberg and Abraham.



Left: a photo of the Katzensteins' shop in 1931. Right: a photo of Sophie Katzenstein

Caption of photo: Abraham Katzenstein, jun., married Sophie née Rothschild from Netra in December 1920. They had a son, Wolfgang, born in Treysa on 11/11/1921. He escaped from Nazi Germany in 1936 as a boy. Abraham ran the Wolf Katzenstein Building Materials and Hardware Shop on Wagnergasse together with his brother Julius following the death of their father in 1916. Leopold, the younger brother, had been killed in World War I in France in October 1916. His gravestone in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa is marked "Unteroff. Und Off. Aspirant" („Sergeant and aspirant for the rank of officer“).

The father, Wolf Katzenstein, had been a founding member of the Citizens' Club ("Bürgerverein") in 1905, which was dedicated to "the care and strengthening of citizenship, the support of all municipal and non-profit efforts..." and was to serve as a community of interests for Treysa's middle class with special contacts with what was later to become the Union of House Owners. Wolf's brother Salomon owned a residential and commercial building on the corner of Wagnergasse and Bahnhofstrasse. Later Julius Katzenstein also joined the Citizens' Club (Bürgerverein). He was six years younger than Abraham and had studied to become an engineer. In February 1928 there arose a conflict within the Citizens' Club, as a result of which Julius resigned membership. He had complained to the president of the government in Kassel about improper proceedings on the part of the city administration during the planning of the reconstruction of the power station and complained that no expert had been consulted, not even Julius Katzenstein himself. That had not been his first criticism of the work of the city administration. Anticipating his exclusion from the Citizens' Club, Julius Katzenstein chose to resign membership.

Reprisals against the Katzenstein family after 1933: On 4 September 1933 members of the SA led the cattle trader Moses (called Moritz) Moses through the streets of Treysa with a sign in his hand saying "I wanted to rape a Christian girl". He was accompanied by his wife, Clothilde. Afterwards he was taken into "protective custody". While this was happening, Abraham Katzenstein protested openly, and his behaviour was deemed "subversive". He, too, was then taken into "protective custody" and brought to Ziegenhain. The local newspapers

reported in Nazi jargon: "... it should now have become perfectly clear to all such elements that the local SA will nip all subversive action in the bud and immediately enforce measures against such persons who pose a threat to the general public." (B. Lindenthal, *Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn*, p. 309) The charges were dropped. On 30 October 1933 a fire destroyed the residential and commercial building belonging to the uncle, Salomon Katzenstein, in the lower part of Bahnhofstrasse, and the building was torn down. It was clear to many people in Treysa that this was a case of arson, and the suspect was mentioned by name behind closed doors. But the arsonist responsible for this was never officially found guilty. In the course of all this, Julius Katzenstein suffered a blow to the head and collapsed, as reported by him in an application for compensation in 1957.

Julius Katzenstein left Treysa in 1934 with his wife, Gertrud, and daughter, Ruth. The family went first to Hannover and then emigrated to Palestine. The person who sustained the damage, Salomon Katzenstein, also left Treysa with his wife, Bertha, after the fire in 1934 at the age of 79. The couple moved to Merseburg to their elder daughter Johanna, married to Siegmund Daniel, who had one child, Anneliese, born in Merseburg in 1930. The family Daniel was deported in 1942 from Leipzig (<https://www.statistik-des-holocaust.de/OT420510-Leipzig5.jpg>). Bertha Katzenstein died in Leipzig in 1940 (<https://www.geni.com/people/Bertha-Breinchen-Katzenstein/6000000166752991857>). Her husband Salomon was deported from Merseburg to Theresienstadt in 1942 and died there.

Abraham Katzenstein was attacked by the mob at midday on the day of the pogrom in Treysa, 9 November 1938, after the synagogue had been attacked, books and various ritual objects, including the Thora scroll, had been dragged outside and partly destroyed. Abraham's shop was located a bit down the hill from the synagogue, where some of the rioters went afterwards, smashed windows and threw merchandise onto the street. Abraham Katzenstein was among the men from the Jewish community who were then imprisoned in the concentration camp Buchenwald for three weeks. In late May 1942 he and his wife, Sophie, were deported and in all probability murdered in the concentration camp Sobibor. [entry in the Memorial Album, www.bundesarchiv.de].

Settchen LEVI (née Katz, born on 23 January 1862 in Jesberg), residing in Treysa, Steingasse. Lisette Selma Levi, called Settchen or Jettchen, originally came from Jesberg. She married Abraham Levi from Neustadt. The couple lived in Treysa. Abraham Levi and his brother, Levi Levi, dealt in cattle from their business on the street Steingasse. The couple had four daughters, of whom three survived beyond the age of a toddler. The youngest daughter was Betty (Genrich), born in June 1901, who later emigrated with her daughter, Lore-Liselotte, to South America from Amsterdam and lived in Argentina. A second daughter, Lena Rossman née Levi, was able to emigrate to the United States.



left: Settchen

Levi



Betty Genrich (Levi).

To her Emanuel Abraham who survived Theresienstadt wrote a letter on 1/10/1945 to give a report about the fate of the Levi family

Johanna MATHIAS (née Rosenbusch, born on 26 March 1895 in Borken), final place of residence Treysa, and **Simon MATHIAS** (born on 4 August 1895 in Deisel) residing in Treysa, Steingasse 17



Simon and Johanna Mathias (see photo on the left, Holocaust Survival Testimonies, Yadvashem, Doris Mathias Guttentag, 2008) lived in Treysa, first on Braugasse. Johanna had come to Treysa as a young girl, where she was apprenticed to the merchant Levi Katz and his wife, Jettchen née Höxter and was later adopted by Katz.

The Katz family's children had died at the age of toddlers. Levi Katz was the original owner of the house on Braugasse, the ownership of which he transferred to Simon and Johanna

Mathias. Simon died in 1936, his wife, Jettchen, ten years earlier. Simon Mathias was an ironmonger dealing in tools, bathroom boilers and stoves, and also sold coal. He had a small shop on Braugasse and went by motorcycle to see customers in the vicinity. He was a decorated soldier who had fought for the German army in World War I and lost an eye due to a war injury. Friends and neighbours often looked to him for advice and help, and he was considered a German Jew with a strong sense of national identity. The couple had a daughter, Doris Henriette, born on 15 October 1929.



Doris started school at Easter 1936. (Above left: her eldest son, Shimon Guttentag, who visited Treysa in June 2019 with his brothers, children and grandchildren, holding a photo taken on Doris's first day of school. Above right: Doris Henriette Mathias as a schoolgirl.)

Around midday on 9 November 1938, schoolchildren and youths who had been incited to violence stormed into Simon Mathias's shop armed with an iron rod. Johanna Mathias demanded that they stop and told them that her husband had lost an eye in the war, but to no avail. Simon Mathias attempted to defend his shop but could not stop them entering forcibly. Eye witnesses claim that Mathias was wearing his Iron Cross medal from World War I on his lapel. On that day lessons at school ended early for Doris; the teacher told her to go home. It was her last day of school in Treysa. In an interview with Yad Vashem in 2008 she described in English her childhood and youth as well as her later life. She said that her father had been "a good German citizen" who had not taken the warning of his emigrant sister seriously. Simon Mathias was arrested on 11 November 1938 along with other Jewish men from Treysa and taken to the concentration camp Buchenwald.

A short time later, on 21 November 1938, his father, Sally Mathias, who since 1937 had been living in the house of his son and daughter-in-law with his wife, Julie, aus Deisel in the north of Hesse, died in the house in Braugasse. Since no male member of the community was present, Johanna Mathias tried to organize the funeral of her father-in-law herself, but she was forbidden to do so. Only with great effort was she able to arrange the transport of the deceased to Kassel. It was not until their visit in 2019 that the descendants succeeded in locating the grave of Sally Mathias in the Jewish cemetery in Kassel-Bettenhausen.

After the pogrom in November 1938 it was especially Johanna Mathias who tried her best to get her daughter Doris out of Germany. She had heard of the Kindertransports (children's transports) and first thought that her daughter would be safe in Holland, because her cousin lived there. But in the end she succeeded in finding a place for her in London, in the household of the lawyer, Dr. Kugelmann, for whom her sister Fanni Rosenbusch worked. In May Simon Mathias brought his daughter Doris, 9 years of age, to the train station in Hannover, where she was taken to London with the Kindertransport. In the interview with Yad Vashem mentioned above, Doris said that her mother had taken her to Kassel shortly before the transport to London in order to buy some clothes and that she remembered wearing several layers of clothing. Her Aunt Fanni was waiting for her in England.

Doris tried to integrate into school life, but said herself that it had not been easy. In the end she managed to train as a secretary. In England she married Max Guttentag at the age of 19, with whom she had four children. The young family went to Israel shortly afterwards but returned to England after a few years. Doris Guttentag née Mathias, however, lived in Israel after the death of her husband. Three of her sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren visited Treysa in 2019, a place to which they had never been and to which their grandmother, Doris, lovingly called “Havta“, wanted never to return.

Their parents, Simon and Johanna Mathias, remained in Treysa. From time to time they were able to exchange 25-word Red Cross postcards. Simon Mathias’s mother (Doris’s grandmother, Julie) received a visa in Treysa which her daughter, Simon’s sister, had sent her from the United States. At the age of nearly 80 she emigrated in 1939 to the United States, whereas her son Simon and his wife stayed in Treysa. In addition to the loss of their own home in Braugasse in Treysa and the forced resettlement in “Jewish houses“, the couple had to endure the fact that the husband, Simon, was a forced labourer on construction sites, among other things. In 1940 Simon Mathias was imprisoned for a short period of time and detained in the concentration camp Breitenau near Kassel for a while on the grounds of “extended friendly contact with non-Jews“. In 1942 he assumed a kind of guardianship of elderly Johanna Sonn from Neukirchen in the “Schön’schen Haus“, one of the “Jewish houses“ to which many Jews from Treysa were forced to move pending their deportation in September 1942. Mrs. Sonn, too, had been forced to give up her home in Neukirchen and move to Treysa at the age of 82.

Jeannette NATHAN (née Schön, born on 9 July 1876 in Treysa), residing in Treysa, was married to the merchant Hermann Nathan, born in 1872 in Bornheim, district of Bonn. He came to Treysa in 1930/31 and died there on 28 January 1935, as marked on his gravestone in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa. The couple had a daughter, Ruth Karmon née Nathan (born in Hannover in 1916), who later lived in Israel. Jeanette Nathan was among those deported in September 1942. Her name is engraved in the stone memorial to the Schön family in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa.

Clot(h)ilde MOSES (née Höxter, born on 14 December 1880 in Gemünden/Wohra), residing Am Angel 183, was the wife of Moses (Moritz) Moses. Clothilde Moses had accompanied her husband Moses (Moritz) on 4 March 1933 on that shameful “march through Treysa’s inner city“ forcefully initiated by the SA. Her husband was made to carry a sign saying “I wanted to rape a Christian girl“. It is not known whether she had accompanied him of her own free will or was forced to do so. Moses Moses, her husband, was beaten to the ground on the evening of 26 March 1935 in Ziegenhain in front of the butcher shop of the Jewish butcher Kaufmann, victim of an act of violence initiated by two drunken men. He died from his injuries in the Hephata Clinic in Treysa. In June 1935 the perpetrators were tried before a jury in Marburg and convicted of the crime. The only child of Moses and Clothilde Moses, Ernst, was able to flee to Palestine at the age of 16.

Auguste ROTH (née Rosenblatt, born on 6 February 1883 in Zimmersrode), residing in Treysa, Wagnergasse. Mrs. Roth had lived in Breitenbach a. H. for a while, then became a

housekeeper in Treysa for Settchen Levi, the widow of Abraham Levi. She is mentioned by name in: Chris Webb, The Sobibor Death Camp, p. 241.

Minna ROTHSCHILD (née Linz, born on 14 October 1872 in Rotenburg/Fulda), residing in Treysa, Wagnergasse 266, was the mother of the aforementioned Sophie Katzenstein and mother-in-law of Abraham Katzenstein. In July 1897 she married the merchant Aron Rothschild from Netra.



From: [Aron Rothschild \(1865 - 1934\) - Genealogy \(geni.com\)](#)

Minna Rothschild (photo left) lived at first in the home town of her husband, Aron Rothschild, a textile merchant in Netra in the district of Werra-Meissner. Her husband died there in November 1934.

In addition to daughter Sophie, the couple had two sons, Julius and Ludwig. 1934 was certainly a terrible year for Minna Rothschild. Julius had a place of business in Berka/Werra in Thuringia. He went there regularly several times a year in order to make accounts and carry out an audit and stayed at a hotel. In March 1934 he was so badly abused by SA men that he died. The couple's second son, Ludwig (born in 1916) later testified that his father had not been able to stand the distress. This had been the cause of his death.

Some time between 1934 and 1937 Minna Rothschild followed her daughter Sophie Katzenstein's example and moved to Treysa. At first Minna's second eldest son Ludwig helped in the shop of his parents, as did his murdered brother before him. As of 1937 he tried to apply for acceptance to the Conservatory in Cologne (Musikhochschule Köln) as a piano student, since he had been taking private music lessons since he was a child. He was rejected because of his Jewish background. While he was on a holiday trip to Stuttgart in April 1937 the Gestapo arrested him and put him in the Gestapo prison in Darmstadt. He was held there for a long time without a formal indictment. Ludwig Rothschild was not released until October 1937, when a school friend who was with the German air force (Luftwaffe) arranged the details and a large sum of money was paid by the family. In 1938 he took private piano lessons with Amelie Heinemann, a piano teacher in Kassel. In October 1938 Ludwig Rothschild emigrated to Palestine, where he began to study piano in Tel Aviv. However, he repeatedly had to interrupt his studies in order to earn a living as a free-lance pianist. In 1950

Ludwig returned to Germany (Wiesbaden) to finish his piano studies with Walter Giesecking. He worked as a piano teacher in Frankfurt/Main, among other places.

Auguste SCHWALM (born on 23 November 1892 in Treysa), residing in Treysa, Am Angel, and **Milling SCHWALM** (born on 2 March 1899 in Treysa), residing in Treysa, Am Angel, were siblings.

Both lived for a while with their cousin Jenny (Jenni) Schwalm (born 1888) at Am Angel 18 in Treysa. This was possibly until around 1930, since Jenny moved to Kassel with her brother Maximilian that year. In Kassel Jenny was seized and deported to the concentration camp Riga, where she died several years later.

Auguste and Milling Schwalm, her younger brother, were the children of Salomon and Leah Helene Schwalm née Ehrlich. Auguste was born in 1892 and Milling in 1898. From 1909 to 1915 he was a pupil at the Secondary School for Boys and Girls (Höhere Knaben- und Mädchenschule) in Treysa, which is today the local secondary school (Schwalmgymnasium). The marriage register shows that Milling married Ilse (Irma) Goldschmidt from Kassel in Treysa in October 1934. His occupation is noted as “merchant“. Ilse Schwalm was able to emigrate to the United States on 29 September 1938. There she married Justin Kuhl in December 1946, and the couple had two children. She died in New York in 1962. Files do not state why she was not accompanied by her husband.

Milling and his sister were among those deported in late May; he was murdered in August 1942 in the concentration camp Majdanek. Both are recorded on the deportation list of the city of Marburg; apparently they had moved there shortly before their deportation or had spent a length of time in Marburg during that period. At the time of their deportation on 31 May 1942 they were in Treysa.

Willi and Rosel SPIER: Rosel (Rosa) Spier née Seelig, born on 17 December 1893 in Reichensachsen, and Willy (Willi according to their marriage certificate) Spier, born on 25 July 1891 in Merzhausen, both residing in Treysa, Wagnergasse 252.

The couple Willi (Willy) and Rosel Spier first lived in Treysa, Walkmühlenweg. Willi Spier was a cattle dealer who also bought and sold agricultural machinery. In the course of this business he traveled by motorcycle to see customers in villages in the Schwalm region. Willi's family came from Merzhausen, where his parents, Juda and Jeanette Spier, lived until 1939, when they moved to Treysa and lived with their son and daughter-in-law in Treysa, Wagnergasse. Jeanette Spier, Willi's mother, born in 1856 as Scheinchen Rothschild, was until then able to manage the household in their house in Merzhausen although she was almost blind.

Rosel Spier originally came from Reichensachsen near Eschwege, where her father ran a well-known matzoh bakery.



Left: Willi (Willy) and Rosel Spier, parents of Hans-Joachim (later: Jack)

Below: Passport („Kinderausweis“) of Frankfurt/M. for Hans-Joachim for getting on the „Kindertransport“



Below: Daughters and grandchildren of Jack Spier in Treysa in May 2019 after a „Stolperstein“ celebration for Jack’s parents and grandparents (<https://www.hna.de/lokales/schwalmstadt/stolperst-eine-in-treysa-verlegt-graueel-nazizeit-nicht-vergessen-12254206.html>)

Below: Hans-Joachim (later:Jack) Spier as a child with his grandfather



In January 1928 their only child, Hans-Joachim, was born in Treysa, Walkmühlenweg. The couple sent their son to Frankfurt because of anti-Semitic incidents even before the night of the pogrom in November 1938. In Frankfurt he went to the “Philanthropin“ (“Place of Humanity“), a school run by the former Jewish community in Frankfurt, and lived in the orphanage of the Flersheim-Sichel-Stiftung (Flersheim Sichel Foundation) along with nearly 40 other Jewish pupils from rural regions of Hesse. At the time, one of Hans-Joachim’s uncles was head of the elementary school branch of the Philanthropin, and a distant relative who had emigrated to England prior to 1900 was a patron of the construction of the orphanage. In the spring of 1939 Willi and Rosel Spier were able to send their son Hans-Joachim to England on the Kindertransport (children’s transport) along with other children from the foundation and the head of the foundation, Hugo Steinhardt (and his wife, Lilly, and both daughters, Lore and Helga). They were to leave Frankfurt by train on 15 March and later travel on the passenger ship “SS Prague“ departing from Hoek van Holland. Hans-Joachim Spier later recalled that close to the border to Holland he became afraid because he did not know exactly what his mother had packed in the officially limited luggage and now Gestapo officials had boarded

the train and ordered him to open the suitcase. He was relieved when the search transpired without incident.

In England, James Armand de Rothschild, member of the British House of Commons, allowed the group the use of his country house in Waddington. The group from Frankfurt was widely known as “the cedar boys“, named after the cedar trees in front of the country house. Hans-Joachim celebrated his bar-mitzvah along with other boys there. He finished elementary school at the local school and then soon moved to the village of Waddington to live with an English family who had a son about his age. He wanted to be independent and soon started an apprenticeship as a baker and confectioner, which he successfully completed. He then married and opened a bakery and cake shop along with branches. Some of his recipes are based on holiday pastries he knew from home. He never saw his parents again. Three daughters of Hans-Joachim Spier, known later in England as “Jack Spier“, visited Treysa with three of their adult children in May 2019. They gave a moving speech at the ceremony to celebrate the laying of memorial paving stones in Wagnergasse in remembrance of their grandparents, Willi and Rosel, and their great-grandparents, Juda and Jeanette Spier.

Willi and Rosel Spier lost not only their possessions in Treysa, they and other Jewish families were also forced to live in many different places. Willi Spier had no other choice but to work in factories and on road construction sites, and his wages were paid to a “safety account“ to which he had only limited access. The couple were among the Jews from Treysa who were deported “to the East“ from Kassel on 31 May 1942.

Jeanette SPIER (née Scheinchen Rothschild, born on 12 December 1856 in Merzhausen) was Willi Spier’s mother. Until 1939 or early 1940 she lived with her husband, Juda Spier (born on 14 December 1860 in Merzhausen), in Merzhausen, the original place of residence of the widely branched Spier family. Juda Spier was a merchant, owned real estate, fields, meadows, and kept livestock in the village. Then the couple moved to Treysa to live with their son and daughter-in-law. Jeanette’s eyesight was severely impaired and she went blind during this period. It had become increasingly difficult for her to manage the daily housework in Merzhausen. In his 1956 review Josef Abraham remarks on those deported in September 1942: “*the blind Mrs. Spier and I...*“ (B. Lindenthal, *Zwischen Hoffnung und Wahnsinn*, Material M 7 B., p. 375). Juda Spier had died in his son’s house in Treysa on 11 January 1941, as reported by his daughter-in-law at the registrar’s office. One of the last Jews in Treysa, he was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Treysa without a gravestone. His wife, 85-year-old Jeanette Spier, was among the last Jews deported in September 1942.

Auguste STERN (née Blumenfeld, born on 13 June 1873 in Momberg) and her husband, **Menko STERN** (born on 30 March 1872 in Niederurff) lived in Treysa, Wagnergasse. The couple lived with Menko’s brother, Jakob **STERN** (born on 25 December 1876 in Niederurff) and his wife, Nanni (Nanny) **STERN** (born on 3 January 1878 in Momberg) along with their respective children in Treysa. Both Stern brothers had served in the military in World War I. Menko and Jakob were butchers and had their shop in the house in lower Wagnergasse. Menko’s son Julius and Jakob’s son Fritz (Manfred) were pupils at the Secondary School for Boys and Girls, today’s Schwalmgymnasium, in Treysa. Fritz (Manfred) Stern was able to flee to Palestine in 1937. Together with their youngest son, **Arthur STERN** (born in Treysa

on 12 November 1914), Nanni and Jakob were deported in late May 1942. Arthur was sent to camp Majdanek, Nanni and Jakob to the concentration camp Sobibor. Auguste and Menko Stern were among those deported from Treysa in September. They were sent to Theresienstadt for four weeks, spent two days in the camp Izbica and were then sent to the extermination camp Treblinka.

Ida WEINBERG (born in Treysa on 11 February 1884), lived in Treysa, Am Angel 188. She was the daughter of Rosette and Moses Weinberg, one of the sons of Israel Weinberg, who died in his 46th year in 1896. She had three siblings: Julius, who had set up a flax business in Wagnergasse and left Germany in about 1934, Lina, who had died in 1926, and her sister **Sophie** (“Sophia“ according to the register’s office, “Sara **Sophie**“ according to the entry in the list of births in the Jewish community of Treysa) **WEINBERG** (born on 15 April 1882), also residing in Treysa, Am Angel 188. The sisters Ida and Sophie Weinberg were deported from Treysa on 31 May 1942.

Those deported from the towns and villages of the Schwalm region – Neukirchen, Merzhausen, Oberaula, and Willingshausen – in alphabetical order

The website “statistik-des holocaust“ names those deported from Kassel on 1 June 1942 on lists for each place of residence in alphabetical order: eight people from Neukirchen, 13 from Oberaula, two from Merzhausen, and one from Willingshausen.

The following short biographies are based on information given by Barbara Greve, in her book “Eine kleine Stadt in Hessen – Neukirchen, die Juden und der Nationalsozialismus“, Kassel 2010, in which she outlines the development of the Jewish community and the fates of the remaining Jews as of 1938, furthermore her article in Volume III of “Heimatvertriebene Nachbarn“, Verlag Stadtgeschichtlicher Arbeitskreis, Schwalmstadt-Treysa, 2008, p. 307 f., which describes the history of the Jews from Neukirchen after 1933 in order of their respective surnames. Further sources include: H. Herget, H. Heynmöller, R. Knoch, Was uns an die letzten jüdischen Bürger Oberaulas erinnert, in: Heimatvertriebene Nachbarn, Bd. II, S. 657 f., hg.v. H. Bambey, A. Biskamp, B. Lindenthal, Bd. I, Schwalmstadt-Treysa 1993.

Gerda, known as **Grete BACHRACH** (born on 2 October 1922, according to “Gedenkbuch des Bundes“), lived in **Neukirchen**. She was the only child of Meta and Julius Bachrach. She attended the Jewish primary school until it was disbanded in 1933 and continued her schooling at the Stadtschule (Town School) until school-leaving age, after which she helped out in the business of her parents. Living conditions became increasingly restrictive, and in 1941 she was required to present a “clearance certificate of political harmlessness“ issued by the mayor so that she was allowed to order prescription glasses for her myopia in Kassel.

Her mother, **Meta BACHRACH** (née Minna Meta Speier/Spier, born on 31 March 1895 in Hoof), lived in **Neukirchen**. She was married to Julius Bachrach on 2 September 1921 in Hoof near Kassel. Her husband, Julius, had taken over the shop and residence of his father, Elias, from which the name of the house, “Eliasse“, was derived. The stately house was situated in the center of Neukirchen on Market Square near the church. Julius traded in foodstuffs, shoes, coal, and brandy. He was a distant relative of the Nagel family in Neukirchen. Gerhard Nagel, who had been saved by a Kindertransport (children’s transport)

to Palestine, refers in his memoirs not only to his own parents, but mentions an incident involving the Bachrach family on the night of the pogrom in 1938. He remembers that Julius Bacharach stood “up on the roof“ on the night of 9 November when groups of Nazis were attacking his house and shouted down at them that anyone who tried to enter the house forcefully would get a piece of wood dropped on their head (Gedalyah Nigal, “Erinnerungen an den Novemberpogrom in Frankfurt a.M. und Neukirchen“, in: Heimatvertriebene Nachbarn, Bd. II, Jahreszahl, p. 467 f.) He actually threw lit matches and injured the hands of one Nazi when he tried to break open the front door. This, however, did not stop the men, and they broke into the shop. Julius Bachrach grabbed an axe and threatened to kill whoever came upstairs and tried to loot the flat. His wife, Meta, begged him to flee, since he could not possibly fight against so many men. He listened to her and escaped over the roofs and hid in the woods. Julius Bachrach fled to Darmstadt, where his sister Ella and her Christian husband, the furniture manufacturer Wilhelm Müller, lived. That is why he was the only Jewish man from the community not to be sent to Buchenwald. Julius Bachrach died of a heart attack at the age of only 45 in 1940. He was the last Jew to be buried in the Jewish cemetery in Neukirchen. His wife, Meta, and their daughter, Grete, lived in very modest economic circumstances after that. A restaurant owner from Neukirchen testified in court after 1945 that he had “supported“ the Bachrach family “for a long time“.

Meta HEILBRUNN (born on 15 October 1883 in Oberaula) lived in Oberaula. An article in the local newspaper HNA (Hessisch Niedersächsische Allgemeine) dated 29 May 2012 stated: *“Twelve Jewish neighbours lived in Oberaula until 30 May 1942: the family of David Wallach and his children, Bettina and Edith, the widow Meta Heilbrunn, and the two Isaak families.“* This information must be corrected in that Meta Heilbrunn had not been married. She was born in Oberaula on 15 October 1883 as the daughter of Koppel (Jakob) Heilbrunn I and his wife, Emma (Esther) née Katz from Frielingen. Meta had a brother, Salomon, born in 1887, who lived in Düsseldorf. It is said that he and his wife, **Berta Heilbrunn** née Cahn (born in Essen on 24 November 1887) ran a successful mail order bed feather business as of 1915. They lived in Düsseldorf with their children, Marga (born in 1915), and Günter (born in 1919). Salomon and Berta Heilbrunn’s shops and warehouses were partly destroyed in the pogroms of 1938. Marga had already emigrated to England in 1936 and married there in 1938. Günter Heilbrunn emigrated to Palestine in early 1939. The business in Düsseldorf had to be abandoned. On 21 July 1942 the couple were deported to Theresienstadt and murdered in Auschwitz on 15 May 1944.

Betty ISAAK (born in Oberaula on 20 July 1907, recorded in the birth register of the Jewish community of Hausen, a neighbouring town), She was the daughter of Max (Marcus) Isaak and his wife, Goldine, called Lina, née Liebermann, who came from Hausen. Betty Isaak was not married but had a daughter, **Rahel Hertha ISAAK** (born in Berlin on 8 January 1935). They lived in Oberaula at the time of the deportations in 1942.

Betty’s youngest brother was **Jakob ISAAK** (born in **Oberaula** on 9 August 1921).

Her parents: **Lina Goldine ISAAK** (née Liebermann, born in Hausen on 11 December 1880) and her husband, **Max** (Marcus) ISAAK (born in Oberkleen on 5 April 1879), lived in Oberaula in “House No. 10“, as shown on the map of the town “with Jewish property“, today

Niederrheinische Straße 14. The “Jews’ school“, the Jewish elementary school, was located in the same building with a separate entrance until it was closed in 1933. The couple had four children, Betty (see above) was the eldest. Then came the sons Ferdinand, Moritz, and Jakob, of whom Jakob was the youngest, a latecomer. While Ferdinand became a businessman like his father, **Moritz** was a pupil at the monastery school in Hersfeld and was described as “very intelligent“, a pupil who “wore his school cap proudly“ (source: H. Herget et al., s.a. p. 657 f.) He was the first Jewish man in Oberaula to own a car.

Moritz ISAAK, born in Oberkleen on 17 November 1884, and his brother Max, also born in Oberkleen, husband of Selma ISAAK née Wallach, born in Oberaula on 10 May 1888. The couple resided in Oberaula. Their daughter, Elfriede ISAAK, born on 2 January 1929 in Oberaula, had two brothers, Theodor (see photo on the left), born in 1914, and Martin Jakob, born in 1920. Theodor was a monastery student in Hersfeld from 1926 to 1929. He worked initially in Reichensachsen near Eschwege. After the Nazis took over he decided to emigrate to Palestine. He took advantage of one possibility of training for a new occupation at Winkel Manor in Brandenburg, one of the Hachscharah camps. After being forced to abandon Winkel Manor in 1941, the administration of the camp transferred to nearby Neuendorf under the leadership of M. Gerson – with Theo Isaak as assistant to the Jewish camp director, Martin Gerson. This was one reason why he gave up the idea of emigrating.

Klara NAGEL née Schuster (born in Mainz on 4 December 1896) and **Sally Werner NAGEL** (born in Neukirchen on 17 November 1891), both residing in **Neukirchen**. Sally worked in Kassel for a long time as a wholesaler for the Barth company, who specialized in linen and manufactured goods. He often traveled by motorcycle, showing samples to potential customers and acquiring orders. The family had a small warehouse in their place of residence in Neukirchen.



Sally Werner and Klara Nagel, Neukirchen
(photos in: Barbara Greve, Eine kleine Stadt in
Hessen, p. 162/163)

Sally had been badly injured in World War I. In 1934 he was even awarded the Iron Cross as a former front combatant by the President of the Reich, Hindenburg. Sally Nagel was interested in the idea of Zionism and was active in the movement and in youth education. In 1938, after continuing hostilities towards their son Gerhard at school on the part of teachers as well as other pupils, the family drew the consequences and sent him to Frankfurt. There he

was able to attend the Jewish school, the Raphael Samson Hirsch School, and live in the Jewish orphanage under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Marx in Frankfurt, Röderbergweg. Together with other children and youths from the orphanage, Gerhard left Nazi Germany and escaped to Palestine with the Kindertransport (children's transport) led and accompanied by Marx and his wife. There he became a professor of Hebrew literature and went by the name of Gedalya Nigal.

On 9 November 1938 a group of NS members attempted to storm the residence of the Nagels in Neukirchen. However, a neighbour living in the same building succeeded in stopping them. Along with other Jewish men from town, Sally Nagel then hid in the woods until the next morning. When they returned they were all arrested by the patrolman and locked up in the building of the fire department next to the synagogue. Gedalya Nigal remembers the family's description of the incident: the father led the men imprisoned in the building in singing Hebrew and Zionist songs to fight their fear. On the following day, all the Jewish men were taken to Kassel and from there transported to the concentration camp Buchenwald near Weimar on 12 November 1938. Mrs. Nagel visited her 11-year-old son in Frankfurt, where Jews were threatened and the synagogue on Friedberger Anlage had been damaged in an attack. In the past, Mrs. Nagel and her parents had attended prayer services at this very synagogue. She and her son went to relatives in Würzburg and then back to Neukirchen. Thus Gerhard saw his father return from Buchenwald after four weeks, probably because he had fought at the front and been badly injured in the war. For 11-year-old Gerhard this was a dramatic experience: his father was pale and emaciated, his head shaven. He took his son aside and told him about his imprisonment, something one would not normally talk about with an 11-year-old child. It was clear to Gerhard that his father would do anything in his power to get himself, his wife, and Gerhard out of Nazi Germany, a country that was no longer a "Vaterland" (fatherland) to him. The path to Palestine, which he as an advocate of Zionist ideas would have liked to follow, was now practically closed to him. Certificates were granted primarily to young emigrants who were prepared to make their contribution to the development of Palestine and especially its economy. He was no longer physically able to do so. So Sally Werner started to learn Spanish in order to be able to find a way to escape to South America. He learned so quickly that he taught other Jews in Neukirchen. But due partly to false information and partly to chicanery, the Nagels did not manage to escape to the United States or South America, since their assets were seized and their modest savings were not sufficient. While their own attempts failed, their son Gerhard succeeded. In retrospect he reported that his parents had come to Frankfurt to bring him clothes and linen as requested on a list. In April 1939 Sally Nagel accompanied his son to the train station in Frankfurt, from where the group of children supervised by Marx traveled to Munich. There they were detained in the hall of the station for allegedly insulting Adolf Hitler. After withstanding this stress and excitement, they boarded the train to Venice, Italy, again accompanied by Marx. Gerhard Nagel later recalled how this fear still gripped him during his first few weeks in Palestine, the fear that "something could happen" to endanger their freedom. His father had assigned him the task of "telling the world" how terrible Germany had become. For Sally Nagel, the wish of his family came true in part, his son remained in Palestine. Mr. and Mrs. Nagel were deported from Neukirchen on 31 May 1942.

Franziska PLAUT née Buchheim, born in Gilsa near Fritzlar on 3 January 1882, was the wife of Raphael PLAUT, born on 16 February 1876, who died in 1940. The couple lived in Willingshausen. The widow, Franziska Plaut, was deported on 31 May 1942.

Berta (Bertha) SONN née Katzmann, born in Flieden on 5 March 1885, and her husband, **Moritz SONN I**, born on 13 December 1879, lived in **Neukirchen**. It was Moritz Sonn's second marriage. His first wife, Rosa Ronsheimer, had died in 1922 at the age of 37, leaving him with their daughter, Bertha, born in 1908. She managed to emigrate to the United States and lived in Chicago as Bertha Bleiweiss, from where she requested information from the mayor of Neukirchen in the 1950s pertaining to an application for compensation. After her marriage to Moritz Sonn I, Berta Katzmann moved to Neukirchen in 1923. The couple had a son, Siegbert, born in 1925. Their house name was "Husars", because Moritz Sonn dealt mainly with horses (and also cattle) and provided the military with them. Later on he assumed the function of head of the Jewish community of Neukirchen. In the autumn of 1937 he was forbidden to run a business. Following the pogrom night in 1938, he was among the men from the Jewish community who were imprisoned in the concentration camp Buchenwald. Although Moritz Sonn had arranged emigration for himself, his wife, and their son, he failed in the end, perhaps because of his advanced age.

Siegbert SONN from Neukirchen, born in Marburg on 1 October 1925, was the son of Berta and Moritz Sonn I, as described above. He was the child of Moritz Sonn's second marriage. The widower had married Berta née Katzmann from Flieden. Some details of Siegbert's education are known: he attended the Jewish primary school from 1932 to 1933, then the "Stadtschule" (Town School), which records his "exmatriculation" on 9 November 1938. Shortly after the pogrom night Jewish pupils were no longer allowed to attend "German schools". Siegbert was 13 years old at the time. For the month of May 1942 a tax record notes that Siegbert was a forced labourer in the field of excavation and received the "prescribed wages for Jews" of 0,23 RM (Reichsmark) an hour. He declared the sum of his assets as 1,402 Marks and 02 Pfennigs in large letters when required to state what he had for "Resettlement to the East". Together with his parents Siegbert was deported from Neukirchen on 31 May 1942 and taken to Kassel, where he was sent away on 1 June 1942. The deportation train stopped in Lublin, where "selection" was carried out and Siegbert Sonn along with 98 other men was chosen for forced labour in the "prisoner of war camp Majdanek" and separated from the group. His parents continued their journey, probably directly to the extermination camp Sobibor. Siegbert did not withstand the forced labour, catastrophic hygienic conditions and life in Majdanek for long. He died on 19 September 1942, shortly before his 17th birthday.

Johanna SONN (née Nussbaum, from Neukirchen, born on 2 November 1860 in Niederklein) was the second wife of Levi Sonn I. She does not actually belong to the group of Jews deported from Treysa; she (like the majority of her family) came from Neukirchen. It was not until 1942 that she was forced to move to the so-called "house of Jews", the "Schön'sches Haus", in Treysa. After the death of her husband in 1886 she had raised her own children along with the children from her husband's first marriage. She lived on the upper floor of the house in Neukirchen with her sick daughter, Mathilde (also called Marianne), who was born in 1890 and had died of tuberculosis in 1941, as medical records

show. The Jewish cemetery in Neukirchen had been closed by order of the Nazis since the autumn of 1940, and the cemetery in Niedergrenzebach had been prescribed for burials in the former district of Ziegenhain. If Mathilde's body had actually been taken elsewhere for burial, then she was probably buried in the Jewish cemetery in Niedergrenzebach. There is no gravestone in her memory there.

The son, Sally, had moved to Berlin very early, from where he was able to flee to South America and live in Chile. Another son, Levi, had been killed in the war, and his brother Moritz, called "Molly", was shot through the lung and sent home badly injured. He had married Bertha (Berta) née Nagel in Neukirchen. "Molly" also died an early death in 1927 as the result of his war injury and was survived by his widow, Bertha Sonn. Together with her son Ludwig, born in 1920, from her short-lived marriage to badly injured Moritz, she lived on the ground floor of the same house as her mother-in-law, Johanna Sonn. On 9 November 1938 a hoard of Nazis, probably from a neighbouring village, stormed the house and destroyed the family's furniture and dishes. An affidavit from the 1950s by Ludwig "Levi" Sonn confirms this, and former neighbours also state the same. Johanna Sonn, 81 years of age at the time, was not deported in late May along with her daughter-in-law, but rather forced to move to the "Schön'sches Haus" in Treysa. She protested against this on the grounds that she was homesick and submitted a request in writing that she be allowed to return to her home in Neukirchen. For a short period of time she was allowed to do so, until the mayor of Neukirchen ordered her to move to Treysa once and for all. Simon Mathias felt responsible for her and took "guardianship" of her in Treysa. Her daughter-in-law Berta was deported on 31 May 1942.

Berta SONN née Nagel, born in **Neukirchen** on 7 July 1888, was the older sister of Sally Nagel, mentioned above. She had married the war invalid Moritz Sonn II in 1919, who died of his war injuries in 1927 at the age of 34. Berta Sonn lived in the same house as her aged mother-in-law Johanna (see above). Moritz and Berta had a son, Ludwig, born in 1920. Ludwig Sonn was the youngest person to be arrested after the night of the pogrom in 1938 and then sent to the concentration camp Buchenwald. Late on the evening of the pogrom the entire house was attacked by a band of Nazis who destroyed furniture and dishes, as explicitly stated in court in the 1950s. Ludwig fled and hid in the woods along with other Jewish men, but they were arrested upon their return to the village the next day.



Ludwig emigrated to Holland after his release from Buchenwald and survived with the help of an underground organization, at first in hiding. After the end of the war he went to Palestine, where he changed his name to Levi in memory of his uncle, Levi Sonn. There he married Ruth Moses from Frankfurt/Main. (photo on the left: Ludwig Sonn in exile in Holland)

As described above, Berta Sonn lived in a flat on the ground floor of a house in Hintergasse. Her mother-in-law, Johanna Sonn née Nussbaum lived with her sick daughter Mathilde, born in 1890, on the third floor.

Salomon SPIER (born in Merzhausen on 28 September 1864), residing in Merzhausen, married Gütchen (Gitta) Levi (born in 1868) from Ottrau in 1889. The couple had seven children, of whom their daughter Betti, their sons Hermann and Samuel and their wives died in the Shoah. Hermann had been a teacher in Hildesheim und Leer, and both his daughters, Henriette and Berna, were evacuated to England with the Kindertransport (children's transport) on 5 January 1939. Gitta Levi Spier died in Merzhausen in 1933 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery there. Salomon Spier was deported in September 1942, survived the camp Theresienstadt and returned to Merzhausen, where he died in November 1947 as the result of the hardships suffered during his captivity.

Emma SPIER née Oppenheimer, born in Altenlotheim on 22 November 1904 and her husband, **Samuel SPIER**, born in Merzhausen on 25 October 1901, son of Salomon Spier and Gütchen (Gitta) Levi (born in 1868) from Ottrau (see above), lived in **Merzhausen**. They were the parents of Werner Spier (born in 1930) and Gitta Spier (born in 1935).

David WALLACH, born on 22 November 1886, and **Rika** (Ricka) **WALLACH** née Wallach, born in **Oberaula** on 28 July 1898. David Wallach is described as a "fair cattle trader". The family was self-sufficient and had a small farm. According to the map of the town showing "Jewish property", they owned "House No. 11" on the station road (Bahnhofstraße) in Oberaula. Their house name was Nathan's Vit. After the night of the pogrom Rika Wallach fled to Frankfurt with their two children, presumably to Emma Löwenstein, David Wallach's sister, who had recently taken up residence there with her husband, Nathan, and their daughter, Emma.

The Wallachs, David and Rika, had two daughters: **Bettina WALLACH**, born in **Oberaula** on 28 December 1925, and **Edith WALLACH**, born in **Oberaula** on 27 July 1931. After leaving with their mother shortly after the night of the pogrom, the sisters lived in Frankfurt and Oberaula. Apparently, people in Oberaula remember Rita Wallach and her children pulling a handcart loaded with their modest belongings to the train station in Oberaula and being delayed by children and youths from the village long enough for them to miss their train, forcing them to take a later one (see H. Herget et al., Was uns an die letzten jüdischen Bürger Oberaulas erinnert, s.a., p. 657 f.). In Frankfurt the children were able to attend school, a privilege denied to them in Oberaula since 15 November 1938. They could be together with Emma Löwenstein, who was only a year older than Bettina and also came from Oberaula. She was the daughter of Emma and Nathan Löwenstein, who had moved to Frankfurt in March 1939. A short letter written in the summer of 1940 by Bettina Wallach to her friend and schoolmate, Senta Wallach, who had emigrated to the United States with her parents in 1939, still exists. Barbara Greve dedicates a moving chapter entitled "A photo – a picture" to this letter and thus to Bettina Wallach in Volume II of "Heimatvertriebene Nachbarn" ("Displaced Neighbours"). Bettina sends Senta warmest greetings and says that she is "at home" in Oberaula but will be living in Frankfurt again soon, that she finds it boring now and that it was much nicer when Senta still lived there. She asks whether Senta has found new friends

and whether she (Senta) sometimes thinks of her (Bettina). She wonders whether they will ever see each other again. These questions and the general tone of the letter reflect all too clearly the sadness she feels at the time. On 31 May 1942 Bettina Wallach and her parents and younger sister were among those deported.

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