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Our Family

by

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The Jewish Cemetery at Roedelsee

The Jewish cemetery serving the communities of Kitzingen, Mainstockheim and other villages is situated on the outskirts of the village of Roedelsee and is somewhat difficult to find. A small lane through the surrounding vineyards leads up to it. It is thought to be over five hundred years old and according to Hans Bauer in his article "Judenfriedhoefe im Landkreis Kitzingen" (Jewish cemeteries in the district of Kitzingen) was supposed to have been mentioned in 1432 and 1526. What is certain is that in 1563 the local land owner Wilhelm Moritz von Hessberg, Baron of Unterleinbach and Roedelsee, leased land for a cemetery to be used by Jewish communities within a radius of five miles from there. For this the communities had to pay annually ten Talers "protection" money, and also one florin for each interment of an adult and ½ a florin for that of a child. The Letters of Protection for this were renewed several times until the family von Hessberg sold its right of protection of Jews, "including the tax on dying Jews" to the Bishopric of Wuerzburg in 1651. The Prince Bishop of Wuerzburg, Johann Philipp confirmed the protection and the use of the cemetery.

Even in death Jews had to pay dearly for their so called "privileges". In 1757 an official in Iphofen reported to the authorities in Wuerzburg, that his office collected 12 fl. annually from Jews for the cemetery in Roedelsee, which served those of the Franconian circle, (Jews in the area "protected" by the Bishopric of Wuerzburg, by Ansbach, Schwarzenberg and by free knights). They also paid 1 fl. for each funeral. This went to the credit of the Catholic parson of Roedelsee. On top of that Jews also paid 12 Batzen to the Baron of Crailsheim for several acres of land for their cemetery, and also ½ Taler for each corpse, which was taken through his territory of Fruehstockheim on its way to Roedelsee. They also paid duty to Ansbach for each funeral procession, which passed through its land. The government in Wuerzburg objected to these innovations and instructed the official in Kitzingen to have all funerals taken to Roedelsee via the "Reichelshof" and through the "Muehl-weg" in future, thus avoiding having to pass through other territories.

All deceased buried on the Roedelsee cemetery from 1822 onwards until 1875 were recorded in the "Matrikel" book of the Jewish community of Roedelsee kept by the Catholic rectory of the village. **(1)**

The gates of the cemetery are locked and the key is kept by the mayor. Under the circumstances it appears to be in reasonable condition, although rather overgrown at times. Groups of local inhabi-

tants regularly take care of the cemetery. In the middle of the cemetery is a monument commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. The inscription reads:

"Den Toten zur Ehre und zum ewigen Gedenken an die juedischen Buerger aus Roedelsee und Umgebung die in den Verfolgungsjahren 1933-1945 grausam umgekommen sind. Uns Lebenden zur Mahnung den kommenden Geschlechtern zur eindringlichen Lehre. Nach Zerstoerung im Jahre 198 vom Landesverband der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinden in Bayern neu errichtet."

In honour of the dead and to the eternal memory of the Jewish citizens of Roedelsee and surroundings who cruelly perished in the years of persecution 1933-1945. To the living as a reminder, to future generations as an emphatic warning. After destruction rebuilt in the year 198 by the Council of Jewish Communities in Bavaria.

On the back of the monument is the following inscription:

"Dieser Friedhof wurde 1938 unter der Nazigewalltherrschaft zerstoert und 1950 von Opfern des Faschimus wieder hergestellt."

This cemetery was destroyed in 1938 under the Nazi Regime of Terror and was rebuilt in 1950 by Victims of Fascism.

Memorial for the Holocaust victims and the reconstruction of the cemetery

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

There is also a memorial to the memory of Jewish soldiers of the area, who lost their lives during World War I. The inscription reads:

During the World War 1914/18 the following members of this cemetery district gave their lives in the most loyal performance of their duty.

Roedelsee

Sali Gerst	Kitzingen	Josef Astruck	Markbreit
Rich. Hichberger	"	Simon As-truck	"
Jos.Rosenthal	"	Martin Gold-stein	"
Dr. Moses Schur	"	Abraham Lauber	"
Isidor Schur	"	Kurt Leh-mann	"
Josua Schur	"	Julius Putzel	"
Stefan Sonder	"	Isak Klein	Mainstockheim
Adolf Stern	"	Salomon Nussbaum	"
Justin Stein	"	Justin Sonder	"
Willy Stein	"	Karl Fromm	Grosslangheim

Many of the old stones have partially or totally disintegrated or sunk into the ground, many have been vandalised at some stage. Since 1989 great efforts have been made to take photographic records of the cemetery, whilst inscriptions on gravestones are still readable.

In June 1991 the "Foerderverein ehemalige Synagoge Kitzingen" organised an exhibition in the Kitzingen Town Hall "A Jewish cemetery in Germany" of the Roedelsee cemetery, its history and its people.

Footnotes

(1) STW